

Little Church
Around the Corner
George Mac Adam

~Illustrated~

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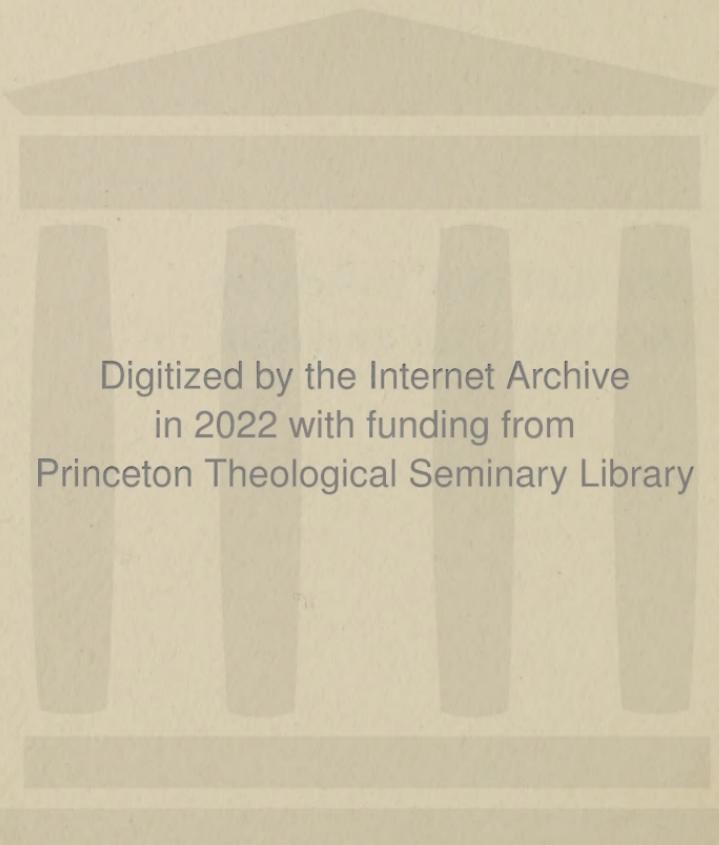
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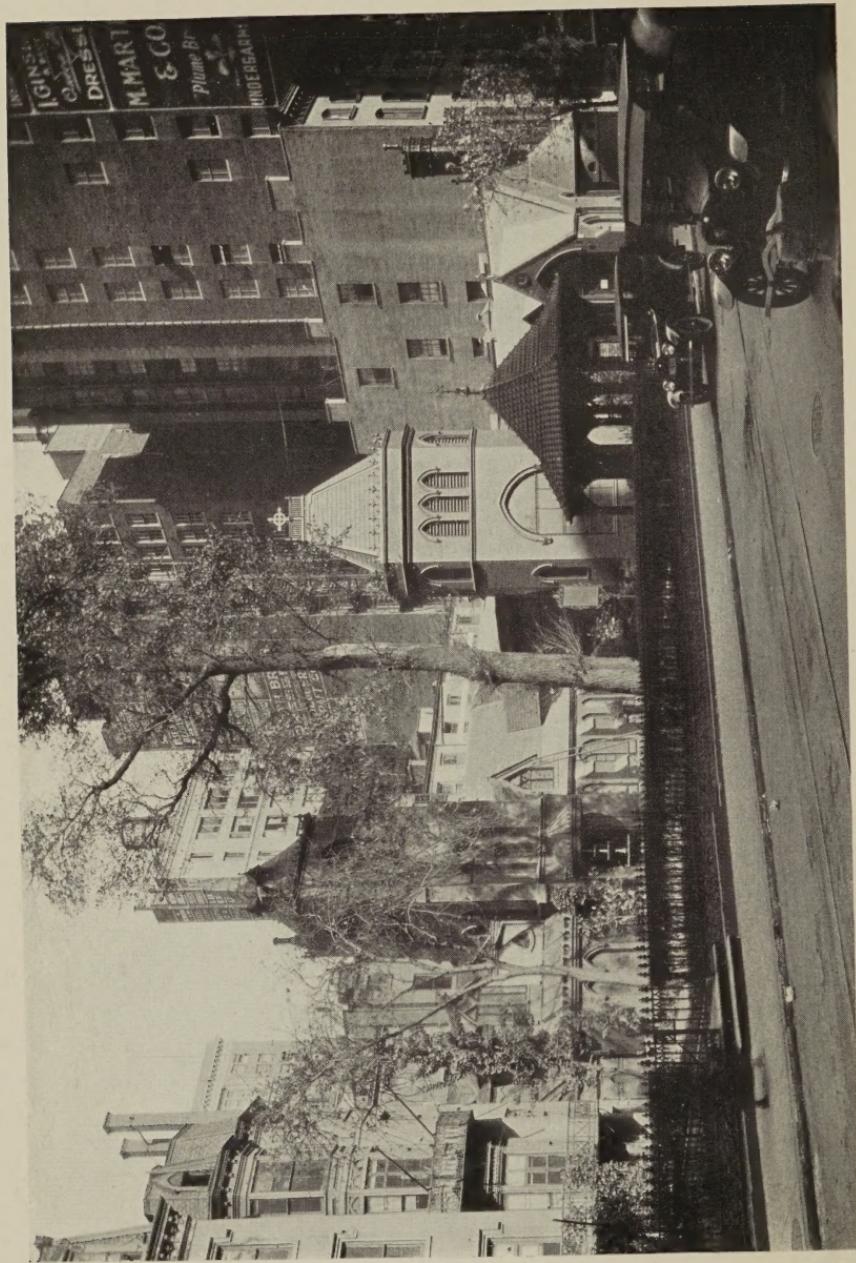
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**THE LITTLE CHURCH
AROUND THE CORNER**



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As the Present Generation Knows The Little Church

 The
Little Church
Around the Corner

By
George Mac Adam

~Illustrated~



G.P. Putnam's Sons
New York & London
The Knickerbocker Press
1925

Copyright, 1925
by
George MacAdam



Made in the United States of America

To
KINDLINESS

THE SPIRIT THAT GAVE THE LITTLE CHURCH ITS VITALITY
GREATER THAN ANY CREED

THE ONE THING THAT WILL MAKE OUR WORLD
A BETTER WORLD

THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS DEDICATED

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Prologue

A CHURCH AND TWO MEN

IT is only a small church on a New York side-street. As the Old World reckons age, it is a thing of yesterday. Yet The Little Church Around the Corner has its place among the famous churches of the world.

The great St. Peter's in Rome, St. Paul's in London, St. Mark's in Venice—each may boast its oldness, its traditions, its architectural glories; but none can boast with The Little Church Around the Corner a place in the affections of a multitude that are scattered far and wide as are the Seven Seas.

Can you imagine a play being produced, its title, "St. Paul's Cathedral"; a novel published, "St. Peter's"; or a photoplay, "St. Mark's?" Magnificent as are those ancient monuments of faith, they lack that intimate appeal to the affections, that appeal to the sentimental imagination, that would make the name of any of them, a title to draw readers to a novel, spectators to a play or movie.

I know of but one church whose name has been so used.

A quarter of a century ago, a play, its sole title, "The Little Church Around the Corner," had a successful run in New York and toured the country for a number of seasons. Out of the play a novel was written that was profitable to author and publisher. Fifteen years ago the old play was purchased, revamped, and again offered to the public. (It is still being produced by stock companies.) Then came the movie. As a photoplay, "The Little Church Around the Corner" again toured America. Four years ago, the movie rights were repurchased, a new and elaborate photoplay made, and now The Little Church has not only made a new pilgrimage of America, but has travelled to South America, to Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia.

The hand of Change is far more active in America than in Europe. On Manhattan Island, its sweep northward has been rapid, ruthless. Hotels, restaurants, theatres, churches, move or are obliterated. The Little Church remains where its Founder put it, three-quarters of a century ago.

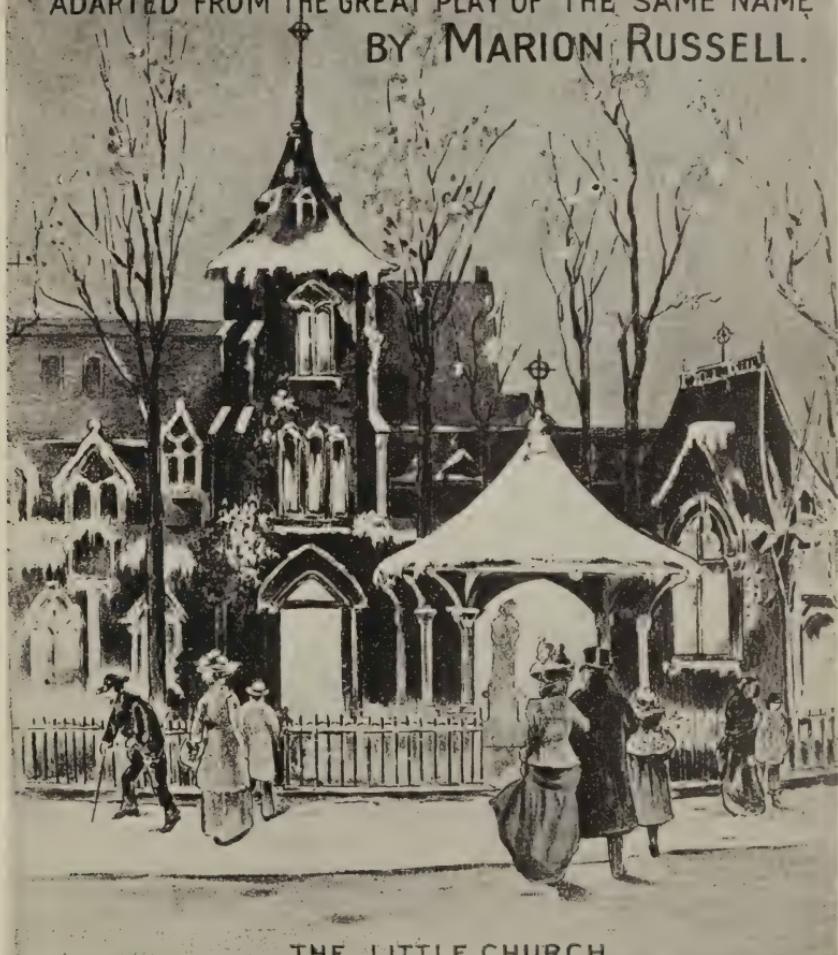
At that time Twenty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue was practically open country. The parishioners, as they went to and from services in "the original church," had an unobstructed view to Madison Square on the South, to Murray Hill on the north.

The city grew up to the church, grew beyond it. The scattered suburban dwellings gave way to solid brick and brownstone rows—blocks upon

PRICE 25 CENTS.

"THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER."

ADAPTED FROM THE GREAT PLAY OF THE SAME NAME
BY MARION RUSSELL.



THE LITTLE CHURCH.

A Paper-Covered Novel, Published in the Early Years of the Present Century

The picture on the cover is a copy of the old billboard lithograph that advertised the play
when it toured the country

blocks of them. Congregation and church grew. One small addition followed another until (and this was years ago) the building received its final outlines. Then into this residential district came Industry and Commerce, with their towering loft and office buildings. Today the house of worship (the tip of its surmounting cross not two score feet above the churchyard) is as though in a well—to the west, overshadowed by a ten-story office building, to the east, by a fourteen-story loft building. To the north and to the south the rows of former residences, now given over to business, are both overtopped by a jagged skyline of tall buildings.

The church around the corner whose pharisaic rector unwittingly was responsible for the popular rechristening of the neighbor in Twenty-ninth Street, has long since been demolished, forgotten. But the sight-seeing buses include that one Twenty-ninth Street block in their orbits, and The Little Church is ballyhooed many times a day. Taxi drivers tell you that “all out-of-town people want to see The Little Church.” In the vestibule, behind the door when it is swung open, is a visitors’ book. A single month showed registered visitors from twenty-five States, from England, from Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Japan.

With some, doubtless, the interest is a mere curiosity. To them, The Little Church is just “one of the sights of the city.” But with many more it is something that touches deeper, finer

feelings; a something that brings back to the old church for worship a congregation that has migrated to new homes, that calls to service the hotel transient; a something that every year causes over twelve hundred couples—many from distant States, some from foreign countries—to chose The Little Church as the place where their romances shall be solemnized, that causes many of them to write, as one writes to a friend, on anniversary days, or to revisit the church, making sentimental journey to relive old memories, or to bring their offspring, sometimes a child to be baptized, more often a grown son or daughter to be married in the church that was the milestone in their own happiness.

The explanation of this “something” that has given The Little Church its vitality and charm, is that two men in whose characters strength and kindness were combined, imbued the church with their personalities. In seventy-five years, The Little Church Around the Corner, or, as it was originally and is still formally known, the Church of the Transfiguration, had only two rectors: the founder, Dr. George Hendric Houghton, who, after a ministry of a half a century, died on November 17, 1897, and his nephew, Dr. George Clarke Houghton, who died on April 17, 1923.

It is said that a man reveals his character by the house he builds. The Little Church has a simple dignity touched by quaintness—unexpected pro-



The Little Church Around the Corner has Been Used Time and Again on the Stage and on the Screen

The picture shows the finale in "Sally," a recent Ziegfeld production. The wedding party before the lich-gate, the Church in the background

jections, many gables, odd mullioned windows, and yet the effect of the whole is one of harmony—an individuality that knows tradition. The church is only one story high, but within is that cool and dusk, that atmosphere usually found only in deep forests and ancient cathedrals, balm to the way-worn spirit.

Outside, little houses for the birds among its branches, stands the lone survivor of the group of old trees that used to shade the churchyard. (The others have succumbed to city air.) Those bird-houses were not what bird-houses so often are—casual expressions of an altruistic sentimentality. They revealed a real sentiment of kindness toward the needy that extended to bipeds that were without feathers and that gave little indication of ever having wings. The old “Tenderloin” was just a few blocks west of the church, the city morgue some blocks to the east. No hesitancy to enter a house of prostitution to hear a confession and administer the last sacraments. No matter how frail the humanity, if they wished to rescue a pal’s body from the morgue that it might have benefit of clergy, the Church of the Transfiguration was open to them.

A church whose congregation was largely made up of the socially elect, whose memorial tablets and memorial windows bore the names of New York’s oldest families; a church that put in a memorial window to two faithful servants—ne-

groes, man and wife, who for years had been door-keepers and pew-openers!

No clerical toadies, these two men. "The teaching and preaching and ministering here are not of the kind that are popular with those who ordinarily have the most to give, and give the most. There is here no withholding of the old faith, once delivered to the saints; no disguising of it, no diluting of it. There is here no abstaining from Scriptural and Catholic ways and practices through fear of offending this or that man or woman who pays pew rent. But all is here taught and done as aforetime, without fear and without favor, whether men and women will hear, or whether they will forbear."

Militant believers in all the ancient forms of their Church, men to whom the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament was a vital reality; but men who, in the business of living, put humanity ahead of theology! Food, clothes, a job—they knew that, to the needy, these were more urgent than prayer.

One of them, speaking from his pulpit, quoted that line first heard in the Roman theatre: "I am a man: I think nothing alien to me that concerns the welfare of my fellow."

These two men "put Christianity across" by the elemental method of practicing the Christianity they preached. It is a slow process, but it made The Little Church famous 'round the world. There is here, perhaps, a nugget of truth for our spectacular divines—for those who endeavor to bolster a weak-

kneed churchly spirit by moving pictures, radio programs, pagan dances.

The two Houghtons, uncle and nephew, were *The Little Church*; their biographies are its history.

The First Man

WRESTLING WITH OLD ADAM

“SIX considerable Paper-Bags, carefully sealed, and marked successively, in gilt China-ink, with the symbols of the Six southern Zodiacal Signs, beginning at Libra; in the inside of which Sealed Bags lie miscellaneous masses of Sheets, and often Shreds and Snips——” Do you remember those “Biographical Documents” out of which Carlyle wove “some sketchy, shadowy fugitive likeness” of Diogenes Teufelsdrockh?

To me has been given a somewhat similar store: a huge, old-fashioned, black-leather valise filled to bursting with paper odds-and-ends—old letters, newspaper clippings, isolated cash-balance-sheets, pencil-memoranda of divers unrelated matters, vagrant pages of a diary—all that jumble, relics of the passing day, that gravitates into the remote corners of desks and bureaus and closets, collects there without order, without system, swept together by the hand of Chance, like dead leaves the wind has huddled in a fence corner.

The occupancy of the rectory of The Little Church Around the Corner passed direct from uncle to nephew. For more than seventy years

the letters that the postman delivered at 1 East Twenty-ninth Street were addressed to a Houghton—a permanency of family residence unusual in America, almost unique on Manhattan Island. When death ended the rectorship of the Houghtons, and the rectory was swept clear of its furnishings, made ready for a new occupant, the daughter of the late Dr. Houghton gathered those forgotten accumulations in desks and bureaus and closets, packed them in the ancient valise.

With this close-packed mass, I was also given a neat, typewritten manuscript, two hundred and ten pages, notes prepared by her father for a history of *The Little Church Around the Corner*. This manuscript shall supply the main threads for the present book; out of the valise shall come threads for embroidery.

MERELY AS BIOLOGIC BACKGROUND

The genealogy of the Houghtons has been traced back, largely by conjecture, to Willus De Hocton, an English manor-lord of the Twelfth Century. It is interesting to note the motto on the feudal coat-of-arms, "Malgre le tort" ("Despite the wrong"), a motto that, centuries later, might have been appropriately inscribed upon the wall of the rectory at 1 East Twenty-ninth Street.

A Ralph Houghton migrated from England about 1650, and settled in the wilderness, thirty-

three miles west of Boston, ten men purchasing the land from the Indians and founding the town of Lancaster. From this pioneer, the genealogical chain is complete, authentic. It includes a man who fought in one of the Colonial Wars, losing his life in the capture of the port of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia; also, two men, father and son, who fought in the Revolution, the former as an officer, later elected to the House of Representatives.

Eight generations have brought the family from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century, just six generations intervening between the man whose home was burned, many of his neighbors massacred, by the Indians during King Philip's War, and the man whose home was guarded by a Metropolitan Police Force.

Let me begin the story at Deerfield, Massachusetts, in a household that was typically Yankee Puritan, from the rectangular, clap-boarded exterior, to the souls of the inmates: Edward Clarke Houghton, his wife Fanny, and three children, Frederick, aged five, Sarah, aged two, and the baby, George Hendric. Our interest is in the baby. He was born February 1, 1820.

The father died. Another baby boy arrived. The family purse was lean. The young mother moved her brood to Pittsfield, and, being a typical New England woman, got employment as a school-

teacher. She also rented a couple of "spare rooms," did some dressmaking, and eked a slender income.

Early my tottering little feet were planted in the Puritan paths and sedulously was I taught to walk therein. With Saturday's sun the week was done. Up into the cupboard went the playthings, down came the Westminster Catechism.

I remember how once my little child liver was almost frightened out of me, and how I looked from one side to the other to see if the Devil were not holding out his claws to catch me and to carry me off, as the wickedness of the sin that I had committed was being set before me. I had told a boy, who was teasing me, that he behaved as if the Devil were in him. Away he ran, "lickety-clipety" to my dear good mother, and said: "George has been swearing!" She took me up on her knee and, beginning with the fall of Adam, went on to speak of Cain and other Bible sinners, and the fearful doom of the wicked, until I thought that Cain was nothing of such a sinner as I was, and that the Devil would surely take me in his claws right off from my mother's knee.

Broods will disintegrate into entities, and each entity go its own way. Frederick got from under the mother-wing, went to New York. George followed him.

When a lad of fourteen or fifteen I came to New York, having been taught to think, for instance, and verily thinking, that Theatre was only another name for hell, that all who frequented the former would surely find their place in the latter.

I had here a cousin some years my senior, much more experienced, and not wanting in mischievous ways, to whom by his anxious mother I had very unwisely been held up as an example. We were walking one evening, this cousin and I, along Chatham Street. We came to the entrance of the old Chatham Street Theatre. He stopped and said: "I dare you to go in." He had the tickets ready, and in we went. The play was a miserable, low, wretched comedy, and a half hour sufficed to disgust me with the Piece and the Place.

A letter was written that night by that cousin to his mother with somewhat this beginning:

"Dear Mother: You are forever holding up George Houghton to me as an example, and wishing that I would behave as well as he does. Where do you think I saw him to-night? In the pit of the Chatham Street Theatre!"

With as little delay as possible, you may be sure, that mother made her way to my mother with that letter and said:

"Oh, sister Fanny! sister Fanny! I am so sorry for you, so sorry for you. I have never

made much account of my James. I knew that he was a bad boy, and I always said so. I know that he sent to our good old Deacon Bissell, who is the very salt of the earth, those vile Theatre bills—things which the Deacon had never seen before, and insulted him by writing: ‘When gratuitous, you will please circulate.’ But your George—you thought that he was just about perfect, and you have told me so time and time again. But he is going to ruin as fast as ever he can. Who would have thought that he was so sly and deceitful! Here is a letter from my James, and where do you think that he says that he saw your George? In the pit of the Chatham Street Theatre! In the pit, in the pit! Oh sister!”

Forthwith the mail carried a letter from the mother in the Massachusetts hill-town, to her boy in the *great wicked metropolis*. It was written upon that old time paper, a foolscap sheet. It was filled with grieved clucklings.

Why, my dear son, have you not written to me? It seems a long time since I have received a letter from you. Do you doubt a mother’s love, her sympathy, because her heart has been sorely grieved? You need not. She loves you with the same affection, feels that you have trials which patience and mildness on your part will make lighter. . . . The reason you have

so much difficulty is you have forgotten God, your Maker. You have lost all religious feeling, perhaps restraint. You have turned to the world for enjoyment, sought your own way. You have not been looking to your Heavenly Father for help. Oh think of those happy moments when your *Bible* was so precious. You then loved the Savior and would have served him. I fear you did not count the cost, when the path Mother's heart desired for you, was left. Remember, dear George, Mother did not choose for you. Now you must perform the part you have chosen, faithful, but first return to *God, your Savior*, then in his fear discharge your duty.

. . . Any thing I can do to comfort you, to assist any way, I shall always be most happy to do. How much I love you; how much it has added to my happiness in days gone by to have you with me; how much I have thought of the days yet to come if we both lived. . . . Tell me if I can do anything for you. Do you need shirts?

He never went again to a theatre.

From another letter, written some months later:

. . . All are now sunk in slumber, except the occupants of the front chamber, two medicales. . . .

. . . Aunt N. does sigh for the society of

the select clan. . . . Professor D. is with us to throw out a few thoughts to enliven the scene.

Necessity may compel the taking of "roomers," but the clan is "select," breathes an academic atmosphere! As I said, the household was characteristically New-Englandish.

Meanwhile, George, the boy whom a mother's worry pictured turning "to the world for enjoyment," was working in a store during the day, studying the "dead languages" and mathematics at night. No solemn saint, this boy. When his younger brother came to the city, their mother wrote: "I know you will not let your love of fun and mischief lead you to do anything to make his visit unpleasant." Possibly he learned of other things than the "dead languages" and mathematics. My knowledge of boys tells me that he did. Of this, however, there is no whisper from the past. But from the old black-leather valise I have fished out two documents that, put together, give substance to a tale that cannot be told of every boy foot-loose in a big city.

December 8, 1887.

I have known George Houghton about four years and have had him in my store nearly a year. From what I know of his character and ability, I have no hesitation in saying that a

more faithful and competent young man can not be found, and I have no doubt but that he will give entire satisfaction to whom ever shall employ him.

GEO. G. SHEPPARD,
591 Broadway, N. Y.

TARRY TOWN ACADEMY,
March 21, 1838.

MR. HOUGHTON, SIR

These lines are to inform you that I have concluded to have you come up and assist me in school. The Steam Boat Union will come out to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock, foot of Barclay Street, and stop at the old State prison wharf. I would like to have you bring a recommendation with you from the person you are taking lessons of, relative to your qualifications in Latin and Greek, the other branches I can determine myself.

I remain Yours, with respect

A. NEWMAN.

The State prison wharf mentioned by Mr. Newman was the one at Sing Sing, six miles distant from Tarrytown. Even with this added mileage, the steamboat was more convenient than the old stage coach.

Supporting himself by teaching, he prepared for

college. His health, never robust, broke down. His mother wrote him:

George, how is your health? I hoped ere this your health would have been restored. How I wish we had the means to send to you to come to us. I think our country air and care would do wonders.

But his resolution was robust. He stuck to his dual task; entered the University of the City of New York; supported himself while there, by teaching; graduated, July 20, 1842, with first honors, the valedictorian.

During his college years, two tendencies manifested themselves: the one, literary; the other, spiritual. The evidence of the one, a small magazine, *The Iris*, of which he and a classmate, George Henry Moore, were editors and publishers. The evidence of the other, a self-determination in the matter of religious belief. His mother was a member of the Congregational Church at Pittsfield. In New York, young Houghton became a member of the West Presbyterian Church; but in August, 1841, he was "at his own request, dismissed and recommended to the fellowship of St. Luke's Church (Episcopalian)."

With most of us, religious denomination is a matter of inheritance. If there be change, any weighing and choosing of doctrines, it is apt to be

when time has brought a man to the sober years. But at twenty-one, with the world before him?—no, it is life, warm, colorful life that then absorbs his attention.

I have already said that the boy was no solemn saint. Neither was the youth of twenty-one clammy-natured, thin-blooded, indifferent to the warmth and color of life. Jollity and comradeship he knew; romance was a thing that allured, a thing with which he dallied—the spring stirred its wonted fires. But to him, religion, the path to Heaven, was real, the one enduring thing, over-shadowing all else. With that same iron will that made him break his health in the earning of an education, he strove to chain up the “unruly regiment” within his breast so that he might be worthy of admittance to the Eternal Kingdom.

While still in college he had decided what his life-work should be. Just before graduation, his friend, Dr. Edward Ballard, wrote him:

I am more and more persuaded that it will be advisable for you to spend a year in teaching, before entering on the course of Theological study at our seminary. It will be an amazing relief to you to be enabled to pass through without the embarrassment of debt, which I am sure would be to you great, both in the anticipation and the reality. . . .

There is another important matter, and this

is your *health*. You have exerted yourself wonderfully, and you have been wonderfully sustained. But the cord that is always stretched to its utmost tension, will at length break. As soon as College is over, RECREATE. Otherwise, your health will be gone; and then how can you use the learning you have so *laboriously* acquired? How can you then be useful, as you desire and ought to be, among men? Think of all this, and let your summer months be a VACATION from study, if they are not from teaching.

Whether or not he heeded Dr. Ballard's admonition concerning the summer vacation, the record does not show. He did *not* take the advice to postpone his entry into the theological seminary. The autumn found him studying theology under Dr. Muhlenberg, at College Point, Long Island. It also found him teaching Greek in St. Paul's College, an advanced school for youths, conducted by Dr. Muhlenberg at Flushing, Long Island.

College Point and Flushing, now both within the bounds of Greater New York, were then out-lying villages, the journey thither costing considerable time and convenience.

Two of the theological student's classmates in college, his two cronies, continued in New York: George Henry Moore, to study law, paying his

way by being librarian; Marcus Lorenzo Taft, to study medicine, paying his way by tutoring and copying.

All three were scant of money, scant of leisure; visits between New York and College Point were rare occasions, too infrequent for the needs of comradeship; and so there was a correspondence. That part of it which was addressed to College Point has come into my possession by way of the old black-leather valise. Sorted out, piled by itself, it forms a thick stack—the only thing in the valise (except another batch of letters written four-score years later) that gives evidence of having been systematically preserved. That fact by itself gives insight into the Houghton character. The friendly letter that has given up its news, can serve but one purpose: it gives some slight hold on what Time is inexorably stealing from us—a taper, let us say, with which we may strive to bring about us “the light of other days.”

Even to the alien eye, there comes from these now eighty-year-old letters a radiance of fine friendship. And we get glimpse, across the gap of years, of Moore and Taft and the crony to whom they wrote at College Point.

The divinity student was at the storm-and-stress period. Literary ambition warred with theological studies; impulse, with principle; the flesh, with the spirit; the actual, with the ideal.

He contributed articles to the periodicals. Some

were published. In the letters from his friends, items like these recur again and again:

I have seen the *Democratic Review*. Nothing of interest to you in it. G.H.M. says it is printed two weeks before the first of the month when it is delivered. The *Knickerbocker* has not yet appeared in these parts. When it comes, should it contain your article, I will send you information thereof immediately. So be on the qui vive.

He wrote poems. I do not know if any of these found their way into print. But he had a book, a "Nugæ," into which they were copied. Himself writing an execrable hand, he got his friend Taft, the copyist, to do the work. Could friendship give better proof of itself! "By setting apart this afternoon and evening for the purpose I have succeeded in getting the poems in hand copied into your 'Nugæ'." At another time Taft wrote: "Be forthcoming on Saturday but *don't* bring your 'Nugæ'. (The willing and obedient shall eat the fat of the land.)"

There were frequent requests from College Point that books—sometimes purchased, more often borrowed—be forwarded. If the titles mentioned in the letters are indicative, his reading was largely the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. So too with his muse: much of his versifying was

translating the Attic poets, also the Latin hymns of the old Monks.

It was his strength, not his theological studies, that paid the price for his literary pursuits. His friends were constantly admonishing him to give more time to sleep and to exercise.

I am pleased to hear that you have been relieved of a portion of your classes and would suggest that instead of devoting your leisure hours to digging at Greek or Hebrew roots or to the more pleasing task of versification, you appropriate the one or two hours to exercise. Your health will be the better and your mind I am sure none the worse. You must take better care of your body than you have heretofore. You have not a strong constitution naturally, and hence must not think that you can play John Wesley by sleeping only 4 hours or Jno. Graham by eating brown bread and drinking cold water. And remember in your ardor for literary distinction that the sound mind must abide in a sound body.

No; despite literary study, literary effort, there was no neglect of theology. A deep student of church history, he had become a militant believer in the tenets of the High Church movement. Religion was often discussed in the letters that

passed between him and Moore. In one letter, the latter wrote:

I suppose I must explain the unsatisfactory changes I have noted in you. I must think you inconsistent, or attribute to you some of the worst features of High Churchism. I mean to say that, as yet, I see these as tendencies more than as real traits of character.

Your furious assault on our Puritan ancestry, and your unqualified admiration of that canonisation of Laud, by Newman, quite alarmed me. Next thing, I shall be *tolerated*—if I am not careful.

However, I am only saying my say of these things. I speak not against Episcopacy—on the contrary, I am getting more attached to some of its prominent features as a system of government for the church, but I really see no necessity in the case, of a man's being a bigot, intolerant, or having any of the *Laud* features about him, because he is a churchman.

In another letter:

By the way, are you writing those “Letters To An Inquiring Friend” yet? I am ready to receive them and to be made an Episcopalian—Conscience Consenting.

What a baffling tangle of clashing-colored threads is a man's character! The College Point

divinity student who could follow the regimen of a Wesley or a Graham, who dug enthusiastically at Greek and Hebrew roots, who debated church tenets with the warmth that a man debates only questions he believes are "live issues"—this divinity student always had a Queen of Hearts.

Sensitive, sympathetic, ardent—the very characteristics that, in later years, when turned toward humanity, made him so notable a doctor of souls, now, in his salad days, made him a tinder box of emotions.

Among the letters and other mementoes of these College Point days, there is a pencil-draft of a poem. Interlined, revised, rubbed, much of it is undecipherable.

To—

THE LOVE-RESONDING LYRE

. . . (undecipherable) . . .
. . . (undecipherable) . . .

But whatever I essay,
Love respondeth back alway.

. . . (undecipherable) . . .
. . . (undecipherable) . . .

Hercules I sought to praise,
Love respondeth back always.

. . . (undecipherable) farewell!
Love henceforth my lyre shall tell.
Wily Cupid we will crown;
Venus alone my song possesses.

Also, among the same mementoes, there is a dainty little envelope, a style used by girls in the early Victorian Age. Within the envelope, a piece of carefully folded tissue paper. Within the tissue paper, a ringlet of lustrous brown hair, tied with a bit of narrow pink ribbon. I like to think of that ringlet—memorial of a youthful romance—lying in the desk of an ageing rector. Perhaps the rector had long since forgotten it. But I like to think of it as occasionally waking old memories—a talisman that kept alive the individual realization of mortal frailty.

There was always some fairest Eve to whom he wrote, upon whom he called when he visited New York. To his friend, Moore, he explained that these letters, these calls, acted as a “steam safety valve.”

Moore wrote him:

You seem to think I need an explanation of all your *γννᾶινας* demonstrations. I should, perhaps, if we were not “weel acquent”—as it is; so be it. I must confess my astonishment at your referring me to an M.D. (in futuro) for any authority on such matters. Whatever Taft or any other sawbones may say, I shall rely on my

classical friends, who are authority for anything and everything respecting the "tender passion."

Here follow a half dozen Latin quotations. Moore then continues:

When I see you leaping a stile, or a broom-stick, I may think I observe "quantillum Houghtonii antiqui"—for the "ass-ceticism," I need no "incentive additional" to associate a "hoof" with it! However—Heaven keep us in all good works!

The divinity student had announced his intention of finding a solution for the problem of temptation, by ceasing his visits to New York, remaining at College Point, drawing into his shell. This was followed by another announcement: his intention to become a celibate and take up missionary work.

His friend, Moore, gives so good a picture, not only of this period of ferment, of the transition from immaturity to maturity, but also of the unchanging characteristics of the man himself, that I quote at some length from four letters that cover near a year's development.

LETTER 1.

I received yours of the 2nd last evening, quite late. I have this morning sent down the enclosure to Miss —.

...

I was much amused at the latter portion of your epistle. You need not fear that your friends here will not be lenient enough for any and all your faults. If you don't come down—why they must go up—though you have chosen rather a cool season to commence your career as a hermit, or monk, or any good Jesuitical personage, who eschews worldly intercourse and retires to his hermitage, or cell, or (more generally) to the bosom of his sodality, to cultivate his mind at the expense of his heart and sacrifice his affections to his intellect. However, I know you too well and (spite of your valorous self-denial) esteem you too highly to think for a moment that you will commit yourself to any such folly. You see I give you little credit for that same self-denial—but never mind.

To return, when you need any championship in a certain quarter, I promise my poor service.

LETTER 2.

Re-read my letter to see if I put you in that class of priests whose sacrifices are *not* pleasing to anybody. I think I did not. So keep easy. . . . If I did not expressly read you out of that category then—

Hear ye!

“Be it known to all men—and *one* woman (not to be mentioned *now*)—that I, G.H.M., do not think, believe, or for a moment suppose that

G.H.H. will ever become really and entirely a hermit, monk, or any other sort of heathen man, totally eschewing society, particularly of females. Nor do I, the said G.H.M., think that people generally, in talking on these subjects, *mean* one-half they say, especially when they exalt single blessedness or any other singularity as fulfilling ‘the law.’”

LETTER 3.

I have no hesitation in saying No! to the Nashotah question. In the first place you are not fitted by nature for such a situation. Your whole nature is bound up in sympathy. Without an understanding and appreciating sympathy, no man, woman or child can reach you. Society is valueless without it, and solitude would be insupportable. . . .

Nor are you better fitted for the Nashotah station by education. In this you have followed nature, and obeyed impulse, gratifying yourself in whatever acquirements you have made—not without reference to higher ultimate ends, but at the same time looking for a high and commanding influence to be wielded for those ends. Physical training, you know as well as I do, you are entirely deficient in. Your constitution would never suffice for the labors of a missionary.

Leave all these dreams of self-immolation, abjuring the world, or regenerating it by any

Jesuitism. The Battle For Truth is to be fought in open day, in a straightforward, manly way. The errors of life are to be overcome by meeting them—as are all evils of this nature. Do you think you will be able to do more for the cause in which you have embarked by eschewing society? If you think so, do so. But let your thought be the expression of principle, not feeling, nor worse, sentiment. You have one work to do, first of all: to endeavor to restore your health and strength, before you can dream of any great enterprise, in any sphere.

LETTER 4.

I am right glad to see you are sensible of that enormous deficiency at your monastic quarters—the want of a heart. The most practical expression of a heart is always in the shape of a woman. Your paragraph on this topic is the best I have ever heard from you on any similar subject.
Macte virtute.

After all, George, a man needs a very near and very dear friend to fill the place closest to his heart, one to whom he may look for constant sympathy, and whose interests are all so interwoven with his, that they stand or fall together.

The theological studies came to an end in the early summer of 1845. In the fall Houghton was ordained Deacon in the Church of the Holy Com-

munion, Sixth Avenue and Twentieth Street, New York, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Horatio Potter, Bishop of New York, officiating. Dr. Muhlenberg was the rector of this church, and his erstwhile divinity student now became his curate. Friend Moore wrote, congratulating Houghton on his "success and prosperity." The following year he was advanced to the Priesthood, continuing for another twelve-month as Dr. Muhlenberg's curate.

The winter of 1847 found him without parish moorings, a priest looking for priestly work.

BARE HANDS AND A BACKBONE

A MAN looking for work learns a lot of things. It is a rough school, but a good one for the man made of the right stuff. It is particularly useful as a post-graduate course: it teaches the collegian to trim his tail-feathers—instead of dreaming of empyrean flight, he compromises on a journey nearer the old, prosaic, work-a-day earth.

The vagrant pages of a diary, to which I have already referred, relate to this period in the young priest's life. There are only fifteen of them, time-stained, loose, without chronological sequence. The entries are largely of his employment upon the various Sabbaths: of services in which he assisted, of pulpits that he filled in the absence of the regular occupant, the texts from which he preached his sermons. All these things I skip: seed long since sown, the reapers long since gone to their harvest-home.

But there are some entries that have current value. They help us summon that young priest out of the dead past, give us a viable presentment of him—a right but very human sort of person, accepting bitter lessons but not with too much

meekness, his ego being deflated but pride of intellect a-smoulder.

APRIL 16", THE LAST SUNDAY IN LENT

Preached for Mr. Howland in the morning. I was much dissatisfied with my sermon and its delivery. I shall preach no more—*ἵν δυνήται*—until I have *something* to preach. Mr. Howland is rector of the Church of the Holy Apostles. Not long since, a Rev. Mr. Gordon told me how Mr. Howland became rector. Mr. Preston, Mr. Howland, and myself, being before the vestry, a letter was written by a friend of Mr. Howland, promising \$2,000 on condition of Mr. Howland being elected. Horace, had he been living, might have added to his ode, that *Gold*, the God of this World, is potent also to open vestry room and pulpit door.

“fore enim tutum iter et patens
Converso in pretium Deo,
Annum per medias ire Satellites
Et perrumpere amat saxa, potentius
Ictu fulmines.”

Lib. 3, C. XVI.

I was to preach for the blacks (Messiah) in the afternoon. Dr. Haight for some reason, unknown to me, had sent Mr. Morris. “And be ye courteous” is an apostolic precept not always

regarded by apostolic men. I went to St. Thomas. I do not admire Dr. Whitehouse as a preacher or priest. Such sermons do no good. He circumnavigated the whole sea of the gospel. Yesterday Mr. Vance was confirmed. Bishop Potter is, I judge, a man of great integrity, one who never speaks of countries he has not visited. There are too many religious travels by persons of imagination. I went with the Bishop to Dr. Muhlenberg's Vestry Room. I was asked to remain. There being, however, a lack of seats the late assistant gave place to Mrs. Diller and Howland—"and be ye courteous."

APRIL 17"

. . . Coming out of church I met Mrs. S.. "Robert's tutor" had to listen to words he could not bear except on the broad shoulders of it must needs be. Poverty makes one very *portable*.

APRIL 18"

. . . I find Dr. S., with all his professions, unreliable. Inadequacy of voice, it seems, prevented my success with regard to Trinity. I learned, however, that my endeavor had been preceded by an endeavor of Mr. Mahan. But he and his "troop of friends," Mr. Parks, Professor Mahan, et al, had met with like ill-success. It is wrong, I suppose, yet I am not sorry. I

have no friends. Why then not trust in the Lord. For it is better than to put any confidence in Princes—even.

APRIL 22"

Read prayers as usual for Dr. Muhlenberg, he being sick. I walked home with him. He neither thanked me for my services, nor asked them for Easter. "And be ye courteous."

APRIL 23", EASTER SUNDAY

Went to the Holy Communion at 6 A.M. The usual "fancy service." A number of devout women were present. All was very fine. Dr. Muhlenberg with seeming surprise heard of my black engagement: thought I was to be with Howland, or he had asked me to be with him. Credat Indaens. Preached and administered the Communion to the blacks. At the Holy Communion P.M. A multitude of Medes, Parthians, and dwellers in the V Avenue were congregated.

Too large a diet of "humble pie" produces an acute indigestion that distorts the vision. Hence the scorn for the "fancy service" (in which he believed), for the "multitude of Medes, Parthians, and dwellers in the V Avenue," for all who did not have to eat the portion of poverty.

In those days it was a bare-handed charity that

the city doled out at Bellevue Hospital. The nurses were prisoners from Blackwell's Island. There were no appointed chaplains: if the sick and dying received spiritual comfort, it was from some volunteer.

Another kind of entry now begins to appear in these pages of the diary.

Took tea at De Peyster's. At the orphan asylum. Baptized Henry Eaton and David K.

Very snowy evening. At Bellevue Hospital. Administered communion to James Smith.

This kind of entry increases in number. Through them, as through a peep-hole, we get sight of the young priest, in fair weather and in foul, bearing his ministrations to the orphaned, to the stricken in health and purse.

In the gaunt wards of hospital and asylum, he saw things that roused that deeply sympathetic nature, roused it so that he turned his back on ambition, on personal advantage, set himself an humble, obscure task. Among the poor of the great city, there was work to be done, a call for toilers. The man who had dreamed of "literary distinction," who had dreamed of achieving "a high and commanding influence," now had a new dream—*a parish among the poor*.

It was the task at hand, the day's work: the years revealed it, his "acres of diamonds"!

He found two families (together they would total six communicants) who had sufficient faith in his dream to promise their allegiance. The Rev. Mr. Lawson Carter promised the Sabbath use, rent free, of a rear room in his home, 48 East Twenty-fourth Street, for three months. A few school benches were borrowed; an old, "asthmatic parlor organ"; a reading-desk made of pine wood; and the dream had public utterance.

It was on the afternoon of the first Sunday in October, 1848—a dull, dead, autumnal day, a steady fall of rain beating the leaves from the trees, the earth preparing for its long winter sleep.

A devout stranger . . . happened, we will suppose, to be passing in the rain through East Twenty-fourth Street, between Lexington and Fourth Avenues. Being a Churchman, his attention was attracted by his seeing a number of persons, not many, prayer book in hand, entering through a door in a fence into a vacant lot and making their way into a room in the rear part of a house. The rather unusual sight so interested him that he followed them, and presently found himself one of perhaps forty or fifty persons who were there gathered for divine service. . . . When the prescribed order of the Prayer Book had been observed, and the Selection,

“We build with fruitless cost, unless
The Lord the pile sustain,”

had been sung, the minister—who had conducted the service, and who was a young man evidently of very great inexperience, with an appearance, observable by every one, of little physical strength and power of protracted endurance—proceeded to unfold his future plans and purposes: the securing of a sufficient plot of ground, the building of a suitable Church Edifice, the formation of one and another eleemosynary societies, the personal ministration to the sick and the poor and the afflicted, the knowing of no difference of sorts and conditions of men in the gathering of the future congregation, the carrying out to the very fullest extent the ritual and order of the Church in services and observances. The young man went on in all simplicity and frankness to state that for the accomplishment of his plans and purposes he had neither a dollar nor the promise of one, nothing but his Bible and Prayer Book, the Surplice which he wore, the pine Lectern at which he stood and the three months' promised free use of the room where he was.

The following Sunday, service was held in the morning. Other churches made their claims,

subtracted from the pioneer band: the congregation had shrunk to fifteen.

At the southeast corner of Fourth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, on one of the many vacant lots in the neighborhood, a post was erected bearing a simple sign:

Protestant Episcopal Free Church

48 East 24" Street

The entries in the diary during the winter months reflect a dismal prospect for parish incubation. But, in one of the most dismal months, "the male persons of full age, belonging to the Congregation worshipping at 48 East Twenty-fourth Street" met for the purpose of making the parish a legal entity. On February 12, 1849, the parish was organized under the corporate name "The Church of the Transfiguration in the City of New York."

May the name ever prove an appropriate one! For, while in fewness of number, we resemble those who witnessed the event commemorated—they being no more than three—may we also be like them in other respects—even in that of the company with which they found themselves, that of Christ and the beatified; and of the glory

which they were permitted to behold. Here may many a soul be transfigured so as no fuller, no power but a Divine power, can whiten it. Here may many a sinner be transformed into a saint, and many a poor and sorrowful soul be made rich and joyful. But for the accomplishment of all that is proposed, it may well be asked in the language of the text: "And now, Lord, what is my hope?" It is not in soliciting from the rich their money—though we have none. It is not in entreating from landholders ground—though a church cannot be built without it, and we have not so much as for the sole of our foot. For in so doing, no doubt, we should be unsuccessful. Our hope is elsewhere. "Truly my hope is even in Thee!"

The Rev. Mr. Carter continued the privilege of the free use of the rear room in his home. Music, fuel, sexton, "everything needed was in some way provided without expense of any sort." Fifteen hundred dollars was raised for the purchase of a site and the building of a church.

It would seem that the young priest was doing fairly well, that it was something of an achievement, this putting the vitality of growth into a parish that as yet was only a corporate name. But the young priest himself was disappointed: he had learned that his dream could not become a reality, that, to materialize, it must shrink until

it bore small semblance to its original self. "It had become apparent that, under existing circumstances, without endowment, or many influential friends, it would be in vain to attempt directly the accomplishment of the original plan of a Free Church and charitable institution. The plan was, therefore, modified so as to embrace at first no more than a Church with pews reasonably rated, and where as large provision as possible could be made, without charge, for our less favored brethren."

During all these months, Bellevue Hospital "was counted as a peculiar charge. . . . Indeed, its every ward, almost, became nearly as familiar as the room in which our services were held." A community of the poor had grown up in the Bellevue neighborhood. It was as yet without chapels. This neighborhood "was made the field of continual day and night missionary labor." There was not "a street from the Hospital down to Twentieth, unassociated with the memory of a sorrow assuaged, a want supplied, or a deathbed soothed."

It was there, "where those to whom it was the purpose especially to minister were mostly to be found," that the rector wanted the site purchased, the Church of the Transfiguration builded. In this, he was over-ruled. A strong-willed man, the probability is that it was the recognition of cash-necessity, not the over-riding vote of his vestry, that turned the scale. All that we have on this particular point is his own statement: "It was at

first with extreme reluctance, on the part of the Rector, that the present location was chosen”—the north side of Twenty-ninth Street, just east of Fifth Avenue.

The neighborhood was in the transition stage (as yet, more rural than urban), but had promise of good development. The wealthy had some years since migrated from the lower part of the city, and settled in the section between Washington Square and Union Square. A contemporary chronicler tells us that the section “became speedily occupied by elegant residences.” Within that zone, Broadway and Fifth Avenue vied with each other as the avenue of the “elite.” It must have been believed that the wealthy had come to anchor, for that fashionable place of worship, Grace Church, Broadway and Tenth Street, was built about 1846.

May 12, 1849, the Site Committee reported that it had contracted for the purchase of three lots, Nos. 5, 7 and 9 East Twenty-ninth Street, for \$2,800, and that \$280, ten per cent of the purchase money, had been paid.

November 27, 1849, the Building Committee reported that it had contracted for the erection of “our new church on Twenty-ninth Street, for the sum of \$1,900, not including the pews.”

December 28, 1849, a contract was made for the use of an organ, the rent to be \$4 a month, the Vestry to pay the insurance.



The Intersection of Fifth Avenue, Broadway and Twenty-third Street in 1850

When Dr. Houghton built his little Church six blocks further north

At last the day came for the happy migration. After an occupancy of seventeen months, the Church of the Transfiguration left that rear room on Twenty-fourth Street, left the borrowed school benches, the pine-wood reading desk, the asthmatic parlor organ, moved its ark to the new tabernacle on Twenty-ninth Street.

The date, March 10, 1850.

The communicants now numbered forty.

Theirs was an unpretentious temple: in the midst of vacant lots, a one-story building, measuring about seventy by thirty-five feet, standing some distance back from the street, intended merely as the rear part of a church that it was dreamed might some day become a reality.

The day was one of as great cheerfulness without as within. Nature seemed to rejoice with us in keeping the festival. The church, at each service, was fully occupied with those whose sympathy and congratulations can never be forgotten.

Novelty is a strong lodestone: it draws people into theatres, it draws them into churches. What had happened in Twenty-fourth Street, also came to pass in Twenty-ninth Street: after the first Sunday the attendance shrank—the novelty-hunters had gone elsewhere.

And now began the patient, long-haul job—that

slow, honest building up that means substantial and lasting growth. In his first sermon in the new church, the young priest told how the job could be done:

The command is to a daily cross-bearing; and the promise is, "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." It is only by unintermitting and unremitting efforts that we can perfect what we purpose with regard to ourselves or with regard to our church. Quiet, undiscouraged laboriousness! "Fides opera," "faith and works," is the motto of our parish: they laid the foundation of our commencement, they will rear and cement the coping stone of our completion.

What compensation, if any, the Rector received in those early days of parish struggle, I do not know. The first mention of salary that I have found in such church records as have been preserved, is under date of February 1, 1855: "Resolved that the salary of our Rector be fixed at \$2,500 per annum, to commence the first day of February instant."

One need only know the devotion of the man to his task to realize the probability of his having given his services without financial compensation for over six years.

During that period he made a little money by his pen. We find him writing to his friend Moore:

MY DEAR GEORGE

To shield myself against the predatoriness of the numerous pirates that are coasting in every sea, I shall rely upon your offices at the office of the *Literary World*. A nice little notice about a forthcoming book on “the children of the Bible” could easily thence be copied into the *Churchman et aliis*. Will you see Appleton? My dear Moore—don’t play me a Carthagorean trick—puni ea fideo you know.

Verily

Yours truly,

G. H. H.

He also tried to capitalize his classical knowledge.

MY DEAR GEORGE

As it is not worth the while to cheapen oneself—that being neither the way of the world, nor appreciable by it—I would prefer that in any of your energetics you should say that this individual is patent for an offer in connection with the University. Brag was never a vernacular, or even a dialect with him; but he is audacious enough to affirm his own confidence of competence for any Alma Mater need in the Grecian linea. Am I perspicuous? Do you participate the idea? Then “Perge

modo"—Don't be over-greedy—nor without appetite.

Yours urgently, i.e. delicately, i.e. moonishly.
Vale

G. H. H.

His Alma Mater was cold to the embassy of Friend Moore. No ducats from that quarter.

The need for economy must have been urgent, for when the church building on Twenty-ninth Street was finished, the Rector used a room in it as study and lodging place. It would be interesting to know where he ate.

In a jocular letter to Moore, he called himself "the Hermite."

Meanwhile, there loomed another possibility of gathering a few ducats on the side. On September 24, 1850, the General Theological Seminary decided to add the study of Hebrew to its curriculum "provided the same do not occasion an expense of more than \$500 per annum." Immediately, Houghton was after the job.

MY DEAR GEORGE

I meant to have written you yesterday, but I was horizontal. I want to instigate you to operate for me.

I wish to prejudice McVickar, Prof., in my favor, as it respects the Seminary. I fancied that you might pull a pretty taut and vigorous

string through Henry, Rev. Dr. What I want is as follows: To be appointed *instructor* in Hebrew in the Seminary; that gotten, I am pretty sure the Professorship would follow. I feel that I touch bottom on this subject, therefore I shall not beslime myself with ignorance and blunders —ergo, you can speak *decidedly*. Now Henry is a candidate for the Chair of Systematic Divinity. He knows a little of my labor liniae in the Hebrew from having been shown some of my MSS. He can serve me. It might be for his interest (*inter nos*).

*νῦν πᾶσις ἐμοῦ—*I am as much enamored with this post as you are with your prospective softer resting place, the twining arms of the fair Mrs. M.—that is to be. As I would further you in compassing your ends heartily, manibus pedibusque, will you reciprocate—delicately yet emphatically? If so, I will ever thank you.

Faithfully,

G. H. H.

Houghton landed the job: the \$500 per annum was his. A year later he vacated the room in the church that for eighteen months had been his home. He could now afford more convenient and comfortable quarters.

Faith and works!

There was a heavy load of debt, but the church was growing: within the first year a score of com-

municants had been added to the congregation, two adjoining lots to the west secured, a school house built, a parish school for boys opened, twenty-two boys in the school. Within the next year, additional pews were required. The congregation outgrew these. By June, 1852—two years and four months after the migration from Twenty-fourth Street—the congregation needed a bigger temple.

No high-flying architectural plans; just the good old homely fashion of making things over, putting a patch where needed. The schoolroom, which abutted the church to the west, was now opened into the main edifice and supplied with pews. The needed patch was for the accommodation of the school. It was put on in the form of a low, dormer-windowed story built above the former school room. (The original church building forms the nave of the present church; the schoolroom is the present chancel; the latter was known in the old days as “the chapel.”)

1854: transept built.

1859: further addition to building.

1861: transept extended, and library (now the sacristy) built.

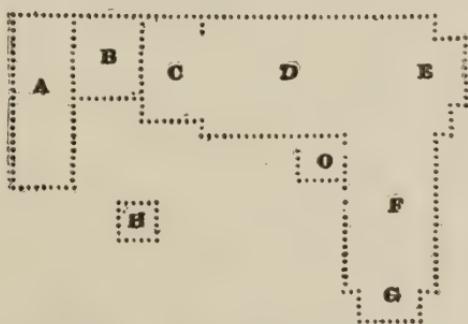
1862: organ chamber built at junction of nave and transept.

1864: extensive alterations, and re-pewing of entire church.

Though prosperity had come in these latter

years, the church had continued the old homely fashion—taking down a partition, putting on an addition here or there, to meet the needs of a growing family. No “built-to-order” structure, but one whose every irregularity tells a chapter of family history. Therefore, its personality, its uniqueness, also its nickname in the '60s, “The Church of the Holy Cucumber Vine.”

(Diagram from contemporary issue of the N. Y.
Sun.)



A. Rectory.

B. Chapel, with school-room overhead.

C. Tower.

D. Body of the church.

E. Chancel end.

F. New wing.

G. Baptistry.

H. Fountain.

O. Organ.

The right sort of a home is furnished, not at one swoop, by hired interior decorator, but little by little, through the accumulations of the years. Each thing means something, stands for sentimental occasion, expansion of the family purse, increase in the family circle. A home furnished suchwise is fragrant with memories; is in truth “my ain fireside.”

That was the way the Church of the Transfiguration got its furnishings—its altar, pulpit, lectern, font, sacred vessels, stained glass windows: at first, few and simple, as befitted a struggling church family; later, when prosperity came, many and beautiful. The old bellows organ, after twelve years' service, gave way to pipe organ which, years later, was displaced by as fine an organ as money could buy. The first stained glass window in the church—memorial to a daughter—was presented in 1862. The black walnut pulpit of the early days was supplanted by a pulpit of Carrara marble and wrought brass; but above the new, fitting into the corner formed by the main wall of the church and the dividing arch of the chancel, there is a carved black walnut figure of the Good Shepherd, keepsake of the old pulpit. Scarce a thing that does not speak, either as gift or memorial, of some one, once a familiar figure in those aisles, now sleeping his last, long sleep.

With the completion of the alterations made in 1864, the building was given what practically are the outlines of today. The modest temple of 1850 had grown, addition by addition, to a church with a seating capacity of over one thousand. In the space of fourteen years the size of the edifice had been quadrupled. The alteration of 1864 cost \$13,500, seven times the cost of the original building.

In the anniversary sermon of that year, amid

the thanks sent heavenward, there crept in a venial note of pride in “this growth out of nothingness and namelessness, this improbable prosperity, this contrast of today with the day of our beginning.”

How had this feat in church-building, in parish-building, been accomplished?

Dr. Houghton’s answer: “Faith and works.”

I think the formula should be changed: one element, simple as it is rare—**FAITHFUL WORK!**

Did I ever tell you of my experience with a very wise lunatic, once upon a time, in the Bloomingdale Asylum?

I was going through the Asylum with one of the governors, that good man, Mr. James DePeyster, now of Paradise—God rest him! In one of the outbuildings we came upon a lunatic with a pail of water and a brush and soap, down upon his knees, scrubbing away at the floor of his room as if for dear life, as they say. Mr. DePeyster said to me, “Look at him! look at him! see how he works—see how clean and sweet with his brush and soap and water he is making his room! What an example for all the others!” Our lunatic, with brush in hand, looked up at us and said: “Mr. DePeyster, what is professional religion worth without practical piety? Suppose you come in, and down on your knees, and take the brush and lend a hand and show us

what you can do, and not stand there talking about how clean and sweet soap and water and a brush will make a room.” And then, giving us no more heed, he fell with all vigor to his work again.

In his desire to make the world cleaner and sweeter, Dr. Houghton was always ready to “down on his knees and take the brush and lend a hand.” Do Sin, Death, Grief, Affliction go on vacation in the summer months, or quit in the evening at the blowing of the factory whistles? Dr. Houghton kept his church open throughout the twelve months of the year, kept it open daily from Matins to Evensong, had a night-bell and speaking tube at the door of the rectory adjoining the church.

A somewhat practical sense on the part of the ministers of this church, year in and year out, of what was meant by faithfulness and persistence in duty, has, we may be sure, under God, had its somewhat telling effect. It seemed to be generally known that one could always be found at the Transfiguration to answer the call to the sick and the dying, and that here in Twenty-ninth Street it was practically thought that if our Banks and Markets and Shops were not closed in summer neither should our churches be, and that if the Physician of the body had his night-bell and speaking tube, that himself, as well as his patients, might be the better for

them, even so the Physician of souls should have the same, that none of his flock for want of him might ever, at any hour, be comfortless. (From Anniversary Sermon, 1887.)

Dr. Houghton took his first vacation in 1860—twelve years faithfully and persistently on the job.

(FROM THE VESTRY RECORDS)

June 12, 1860. Whereas, our beloved and respected Rector has faithfully and constantly remained in the city during the summer months, therefore, Resolved, That we hereby tender to the Rector a vacation of two months (July and August) and authorize him to engage the services of a minister to continue the services of the church during his absence, at an expense of \$250. to be defrayed by the Treasurer out of the funds of the church.

Sept. 11, 1860. The Rector tendered to the Vestry his hearty thanks for the resolutions adopted at the last meeting, and stated that through the kindness of clerical friends he had been enabled to secure for himself the vacation at an expense to the church of \$50. this sum having been paid for services rendered during the month of August.

He remained instructor of Hebrew in the General Theological Seminary (salary, \$500. per annum)

for more than twelve years, resigning the office June 5, 1863. The Church of the Transfiguration was now "a going concern," the time past when its rector had to "carry a side line" to pay his way.

We are wise never to neglect the gaining of any useful knowledge that we are able to acquire. St. Paul learned tent-making and by tent-making he was wont at times to provide for the wants of himself and of those who were with him. And to speak of a very small matter in connection with a very large one—years, years ago I gave myself somewhat diligently to the studying, after the day's work was done—the two o'clock in the morning studying—of Hebrew; and by the teaching of the same I largely supported myself while the early Transfiguration Congregation was in gathering and Transfiguration Church was in the beginning of its building; and so did not eat the seed corn needed for planting, did not take as salary for my maintenance the money required for foundation laying.

In any appraisal of the growth and prosperity of Dr. Houghton's church, the development of Fifth Avenue and its adjacent side-streets, must not be ignored. The Civil War grew its crop of profiteers, its new rich who must live cheek-by-jowl with the old, or older, rich. Pressure on the Washington Square neighborhood became too great—the resi-

dential section of Manhattan's wealth and fashion stretched rapidly northward. The '60s saw the old neighborhood of vacant lots buried under solid rows of "elegant brownstone fronts." Fifth Avenue definitely established itself in the premiership that it was to hold for so many years, became "The Avenue," habitat of "the elite."

If noses only were counted, Dr. Houghton's church became, in the '60s, after the early years of poverty and struggle, a rich man's church, its congregation largely made up of the fashionable, the socially exclusive. Upon its membership list, the names of many of New York's oldest families, names that are synonyms for American aristocracy: Livingston, DePeyster, Schuyler, Sutton, Townsend, Embury, Quintard, Guion, Drexel.

A rich man's church only if noses were counted, the animating spirit of the church ignored!

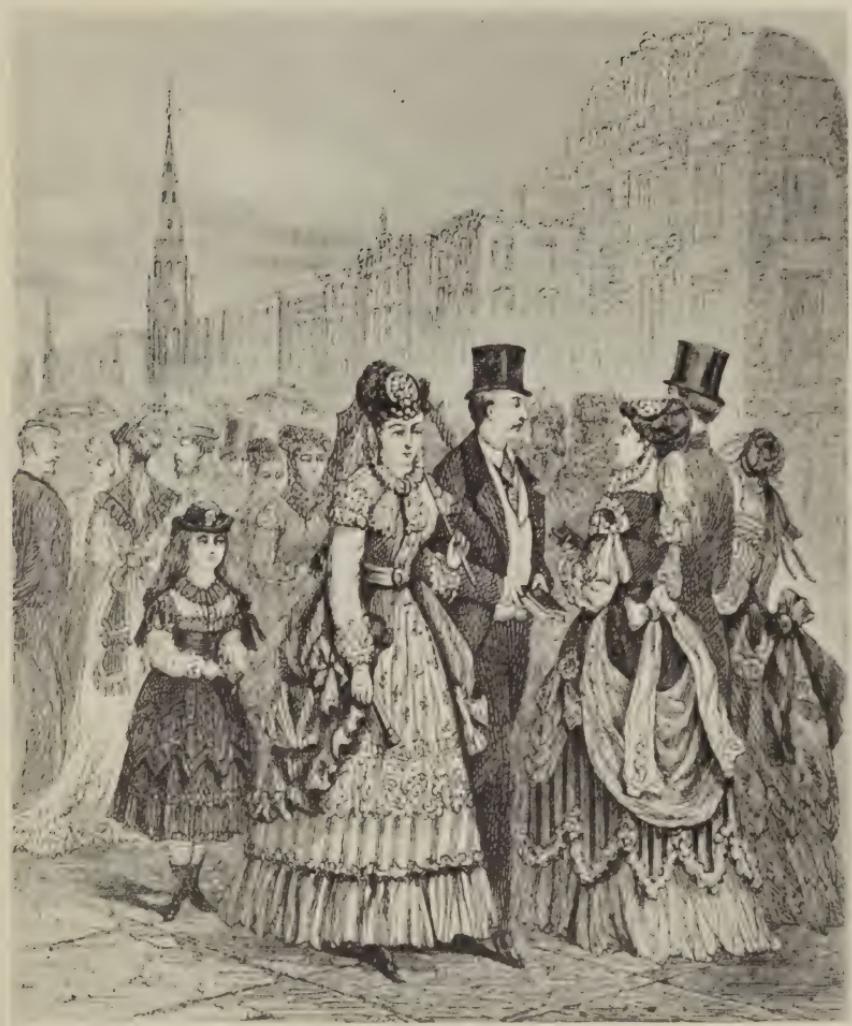
Rich men were in the pews and listened to that "parochial retrospect" of 1864. Going back to those days when Transfiguration dwelt temporarily in the back room of Mr. Carter's residence on Twenty-fourth Street and was casting about for a site upon which to erect its tabernacle:

The location of the church and its charity was not designed to have been where the lines have since so pleasantly fallen to us, but on one side of the town, where those to whom it was the purpose especially to minister were mostly to be

found. . . . It was at first with extreme reluctance, on the part of the Rector, that the present location was chosen—although at that time the marvellous change which the neighborhood has since undergone could scarcely have been foreseen. But herein, as in all things and ever, God's providence was wisest, since, doubtless, for the poor even much more has been accomplished than might have been done elsewhere. Nor are the poor the sole class to be considered; while there are poor in other things than worldly wealth, whose hearts it is no vain work to move to the ministering to the relief of those who are only such.

Those are not the words of a pulpit politician. Nor be these, spoken years later:

While there has ever been, it is believed, the speaking of the Truth in love and with all due prudence, it has never been withheld, or modified, or adapted to the wisdom, or the ignorance, of the Nineteenth Century, lest this man or woman of wealth or influence, in its up building days, would not come to the Church of the Transfiguration, or lest this man or this woman of wealth or influence might go from it. The man of wealth and of influence has never here been courted, or had place, for his wealth and his influence.



The "Church Parade" on Fifth Avenue in the late '60s

After a sermon that was not "adapted to the wisdom, or the ignorance" of the day, a parishioner came to Dr. Houghton: "How could you have preached such a sermon at this time, when pews are to be rented or to be given up?" Dr. Houghton's reply: "Such a time is a good, an honest time for preaching just such a sermon."

In the pulpit of the Church of the Transfiguration, no flirting with Modernism, no truckling to current opinion, to popular opinion, to opinion either in his own congregation or in the Episcopal Church of the day.

A militant believer in the old Faith of the Fathers, he nailed his flag boldly to the masthead!

No tolerance for changing fashions in the "Truth of God": a doctrine that was once the "Truth of God" is always the "Truth of God": no comprehension how the "Truth of the Omniscent God can be other than "eternal unchangeable Truth."

Only those acquainted with the stormy history of the Episcopal Church in the Nineteenth Century, can realize the significance of Dr. Houghton's stand for the old Faith.

For two centuries preaching had been exalted at the expense of Sacraments. Communion was almost universally neglected.

A dozen years before Houghton began his ministry, the famous Oxford divine and poet, John Keble, startled the English Church by a sermon on "Na-

tional Apostacy. That sermon was a trumpet-call to a revolt, bitterly fought—the Catholic Revival in the Anglican Communion.

Young Houghton was among the first in America to follow the standard that had been raised by Keble. We got glimpse of this adherence, in the letters written to him, when a divinity student, by his friend, Moore.

In England, the civil authority directs how services are to be rendered. In the '70s and '80s of the last century—the period of Houghton's richest pastoral harvest—priests in the English Church were jailed for doing what Houghton did in his services every day in Twenty-ninth Street.

In the Episcopal Church in America, it is not easy to prosecute a parish priest: he has a legal status which is hard to touch. But there were those two formidable weapons of attack: popular denunciation and ecclesiastical ostracism. More than one of Houghton's contemporaries felt the cut of these.

The personality of the Transfiguration Rector, the affection that many in the Church at large felt for him, saved him much. But he did not go unscathed. It required *a man's courage* to take a leadership, even here in America, of the movement for the Catholic Revival.

From first to last, from the beginning until the present, there has been no putting forth of

any personal, individual notions of Doctrine and of Duty, of Holy Scripture, and of Inspiration. The endeavor has been to teach that which was held and taught aforetime, that which the Church has received and held and taught from the beginning. There has been no deviation, no change, no turning back, no preaching of one thing today and of another thing, the opposite, tomorrow. There has been but the one simple right onward course, so far as the teaching was concerned.

As the old paths, the paths of the Church, the paths of the Apostles and Martyrs and Saints, have been more and more clearly discerned, it has been, ever more and more, the desire and the endeavor to point them out, and the more earnestly to say: "This is the way. Walk ye in it!" . . .

This Church has been instrumental, by the blessing of God, in doing not a little to render elsewhere—to render, perhaps, generally—less obnoxious, less difficult, more easy the teaching of the Faith once delivered to the Saints, the use of some of the Church Ornaments and some of the Church Furniture and Eucharistic Vestments, that, through prejudice and want of knowledge, had fallen into disuse; and the revival of some of the significant, helpful, practices and observances of the Church Catholic—not Roman Catholie, but universal—which for the same

reasons had largely ceased to be followed.

...
The week following the Sunday in March, 1850, when a portion of this building was first opened for Divine Worship, a Church Paper, at first to the somewhat prejudice of the young and inexperienced Rector, stated in an editorial, which went somewhat over the Church land, that said Rector had requested the Bishop of Pennsylvania, when preaching at the Transfiguration on the afternoon of that day, to preach in the Surplice!—as if even asking him to do so had been worse than breaking four or five of the Commandments.

When the two Eucharistic Lights—that tell of Christ, both God and Man, as the Light of the world—were here about to be introduced, and the good Bishop Horatio Potter—God rest him!—was asked not to sanction what was proposed, but to state whether he were adverse to it—he said, “On the contrary, I think that we make altogether too little of the things which teach through the eye,”—and then he gravely shook his wise head and added, “But you must consider whether you will run the risk of breaking your neck for a straw, as it were.”

Those Eucharistic Lights and that Altar Cross were made the subject of more than one speech, to which the Rector listened in a General Convention which he had permitted here to be held,

owing to the bad acoustic properties of the place where it had assembled. Nothing had ever been seen like them by the speakers in any of our churches before. "That cross is leading the way, and those candles are lighting the way, to Rome, to Rome! sir," exclaimed one of the speakers.

And any one may read, who cares to read, in the life of a certain Reformed Episcopal Bishop, of a proposed indignation meeting because those Lights and that Cross had stood as a standing insult to that Convention during its Session. That Convention had not been invited to come and sit before that Cross and those Candles. It had asked to be permitted to come. And to think of men claiming to believe in Christ—in Him as the propitiation for the sins of the world, and as the Light of the World—professing to be scandalized and insulted by the presence of the Symbols of that Propitiation and of that Light!

But things are different now. And even then at the close of that Convention, one of the Delegates, now a Bishop, standing before the Chancel, said to the Rector, "The Church at large owes you a debt of gratitude, for having accustomed this Convention to the sight of that Cross and of those Candles." (From Anniversary Sermon, 1893.)

A ritualist, but one who never worshipped the form and forgot the essence; a man to whom God

was as real as his next-door neighbor, but who never forgot that his neighbor was one of "the children of God" and that a kindness to the child is a service to the Father; a man whose religion was not limited to his dealings with God in prayer and hymn-singing, but was a part of his dealings with his fellowmen, not a Sunday religion but an every-day religion.

Of the classical literature that was read by me in my early days, there was, in particular, builded into my mind, there to remain and to exert its influence my life long, a line of a Roman poet:

**"HOMO SUM: HUMANI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM
PUTO."**

HOMO SUM! I am a man, with all his susceptibilities to sin, to suffering, to sorrow. I know what can gladden him and what can sadden him; what can tempt and overcome him. I am a man, whose it may be to experience whatever vicissitudes can fall to the lot of man. I may be impoverished. Home and friends and good name may be lost to me. Weakness of body and mind may await me. I may be hungry, sightless, deaf, halt, loathsome to look upon or approach. In the prison, in the hospital, with the outcasts my place may be; the common death and corruption are before me.

And, therefore, because of this, because I am

one of those whose susceptibilities of whatsoever sort I know, and whose experiences, of whatsoever kind, I cannot say that I may not be called to undergo, as some of them I assuredly shall:

“HUMANI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.”

I think nothing alien to me, nothing foreign to me, nothing void of interest to me, nothing a matter of unconcern to me, that has to do with my fellow man, with his weal or his woe.

I, that am human, will never fail to be touched with a feeling for all human infirmity. I, that know the need of a never-failing charity, will never fail in the exercise of charity toward all men.

“HOMO SUM: HUMANI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO.”

This line, early built into my mind, and early chosen as the motto of the seal for my letters, I have desired and sought to illustrate, in such measure as I could, in my life and intercourse with all men.

As St. Paul says to those to whom he is writing that he is their servant for Christ's sake, so I might well have added to the line, in my early appropriation of it, “propter CHRISTUM”: for Christ's sake, Who became man, that what, as God, He knew by His omniscience, as man He might know by His experience, viz.: the infirmities of man, and sympathize with man, and minister to him according to his whatsoever

need. Ah! would that it might ever more and more thus be so with us all! so that we might desire and strive, not only by reason of what we are, but for Christ's sake, to be sympathizers and servants of all men.

When the alterations of 1864 were finished, "no further enlargement of the church, no other alteration," was "contemplated or coveted" by Dr. Houghton. Just one thing more he wanted: "at the main entrance to the grounds, a Gate-porch, with its font for the thirsty and its seat for the weary passer."

Could stone and iron be used in more speaking structure, to disclose the spirit of the man?

A STRAY DOG AND A SYMBOL

BACK in 1850, the new church building, just finished, was occupied almost simultaneously by three tenants: the congregation, the Rector, and a stray dog.

As already related, the Rector used a room as study and lodging place. It was not long after the first service: across the vacant lots behind the church, came the first seeker of sanctuary—"a poor, miserable, ill-used dog with a rope 'round his neck." He made his way through one of the air holes under the rear of the church.

Where the Rector ate in those days of temporary, bachelor lodgment, I do not know. It obviously could not have been in his room in the church, and so his neighbor below-stairs could not have been fed with handy plate-scrapings. But fed he was, day after day, month after month. At first the food was laid at the air hole: such was the waif's fear of man that he would come out only at night. But finally he was coaxed into the open; confidence won; friendship established.

He had a home.

He died some nine years later.

In a sermon preached years afterwards, the Rector said that "it was counted an happy omen" that that abused dog should have crept under the church "as if knowing that Transfiguration would afford him shelter, safety and food."

For nine years, humble symbol of the spirit of kindness that dwelt within that church!

During those years, just before the Civil War, there were many hunted, homeless wayfarers—blacks, escaping from slavery, travelling under cover of night, to the Canadian border and liberty. It is said that the church on Twenty-ninth Street was a station on the "underground route." Of this, I can not write with any authority. When the keeping of such secrets was no longer necessary, it became one of those things that are "a matter of common knowledge." The probability is that in this instance "common knowledge" was right.

'61—the call to the colors—regiments going south—soon, trains coming north, bearing the grim grist of war.

A hospital was hastily opened. There was no provision for spiritual ministrations. The same man who, thirteen years before, under like circumstances, gave his services at Bellevue, now volunteered at the war hospital. He held a short service daily, the music being supplied by one of his women parishioners (another was in charge of the fever ward); he comforted the wounded and the dying; put "last messages" on their homeward way; read

the Burial Office, standing by the side of the hearse, in the street in front of the hospital. This he did for six months, until a paid chaplain was appointed.

July, 1863—Draft Riots in New York—three days' reign of the rabble—business suspended—buildings looted and burned—civilians and police assaulted and killed—armories and police stations attacked—streets barricaded—Governor Seymour issues proclamation declaring city “in a state of insurrection”—pitched battles between mobs and militia—over twelve hundred killed—ten regiments, including regulars, hurried to the city—the rabble dethroned.

It was the negroes chiefly that roused the blood-lust of the mob. The colored folk were driven from their homes, from sick-beds, hunted in the streets, beaten, shot, dragged by a rope at the heels, hung from lamp-posts, bonfires lighted, the pyres circled by dancing, shrieking, blood-maddened men and women.

On the first of that awful triad of days, several thousand rioters swooped down on the Colored Orphan Asylum, then occupying the block front on Fifth Avenue from Forty-third to Forty-fourth Street. The hundreds of helpless piccaninnies were hurried out of a back door while the mob was breaking in at the front. The torch was applied in a score of places and the building burned to the ground. The children were given shelter in one of the police station houses. Many of these were

filled with black refugees, and a number of them were attacked by mobs, determined to get their prey. A horde marched on police headquarters itself, and was stopped only after a bloody encounter with a large force of police reserves.

My father, who saw that upheaval of the city's scum, has told me that there was a catholic church in which a large number of negroes found sanctuary, the priest, with uplifted cross, at the door. Perhaps there were other men of God, who played that noble part. I would like here to publish the roster. As it is, I can give only one name—George Hendric Houghton.

For what reason, other than the instinct that guided the stray dog, I do not know: large numbers of negroes sought the Church of the Transfiguration, and, like the four-footed outcast, were there given refuge.

Joseph Osborn Curtis, who attended the parish school, tells me that one of the most vivid memories of his boyhood, is the night when their "old colored nurse was taken, closely veiled, from our home on Thirty-fourth Street, down to the church."

A kitchen was extemporized. The refugees slept upon the floors—of the Parish library, of the choristers' robing room, the Sunday school, the room above the chantry, overflowing even into the church itself.

"As I recall those days," said Dr. Houghton, years later, "I never can forget the coming of that

vestryman, Edward A. Quintard—God bless him!—from the country, and, with open pocket-book in hand, saying that he must have part, as he did, in the feeding of those forlorn and desolate ones."

When it leaked out that "niggers" were harbored in the church, crowds collected a number of times in Twenty-ninth Street and threatened to break in the doors, to burn the buildings, unless their quarry were surrendered. "But before every such crowd," according to the notes left by his nephew, "the Rector appeared in person, and by his undaunted courage and kindly spoken words, appeased the rioters and caused their dispersion."

When the turbulence throughout the city was at its worst, a police sergeant on duty in the precinct, called upon the Rector and told him that the rioters were likely to return in force any moment, that the police would be powerless to withstand them, and that to keep the negroes within the church any longer was simply inviting destruction.

"You see, Dr. Houghton, I have come in citizen's dress to warn you. You had better put the negroes out."

"I think not."

"I tell you, Doctor, the mob will tear the church down about your head."

"No, they will not enter here."

"What's to stop them?"

"I will stand in the door of the church. I don't think they will pass me."

The sergeant looked into the eyes of the Rector for a moment, then turned away, saying:

“Well, I guess you will do whatever you think best, Dr. Houghton.”

In a compilation of greetings, quotations, reminiscences, and other like things, made in the form of a diary, for Dr. Houghton a few years before his death, the following item is written on one of the July pages:

This night, 1863, during the draft riots, at his suggestion, most delicately made, I passed at the Rectory of the Transfiguration with the Rev. G. H. Houghton. The church was full of negroes and the police threatened to withdraw their protection unless the Doctor turned the negroes out. He refused, saying the altar of God was an asylum for a wolf in the Middle Ages, and that it should be for the black man in the nineteenth century. We, the Doctor and I, were alone, and kept vigil together, expecting an attack every minute, and possible death. The morning came, and we, thank God, were safe. Such an experience makes men love each other.

GEORGE F. SEYMOUR
Bishop of Springfield.

For three days, to those colored folk the Transfiguration had been *home* in the most primitive sense of the word—a shelter from danger, a retreat,

a cave, a hole-in-the-ground. When order was restored, when the city renewed its normal life, thither many of them turned their steps to find a spiritual home. They were made welcome. That particular House of God was for all.

Possibly George Wilson and his wife, Elizabeth, were among those now drawn to the church. Possibly Wilson's pre-war activity assisting runaway slaves already had brought him in contact with the rector of a church that may have been a station on the "underground route." However, post-bellum days found the two old negroes, George and Elizabeth, installed in the church. They acted as door-keepers and pew-openers; in reality, they were pensioners.

Here is the story, written thirty-odd years ago, by one whose pew-door they had often opened:

George had been a slave in his younger days, Elizabeth was born free. He was a tall man with grey hair and beard, a wrinkled forehead above a pair of fine eyes, a stoop in his back, an occasional halt in his step, for he was a rheumatic old man, quite feeble, and therefore a pensioner of the church. Elizabeth was not much better in health and strength than George, but she was more active. She regarded the church as her special possession and care, "for which she was responsible to the Rector and God."

On weekdays you would be sure to find the two, moving slowly about the church, dusting here, cleaning there, arranging this or that, or perhaps, sitting silent, as if at home.

On Sundays they stood at the Transept door, and their faces always greeted incomers, both parishioners and strangers, with a smile of welcome.

They were a devoted couple, devout and humble in life, much loved by all the Parish. They had become, one might almost say, a part of the church decoration, for their forms made a feature of no little beauty in the home-like church.

When first one, and then the other was missed, there was a vacancy to which it took long to become accustomed. Elizabeth was the first to go. In the room where she lay dying, Rector and husband were kneeling side-by-side, close to the bed. The last Blessing had been given; the passing soul committed "into Thy Hands, O Lord." The old man, weeping silently, held his wife's hand. She was restless and moved her head uneasily. Still holding her hand in one of his, he reached out the other, gently passing it over her forehead as if he would smooth the wrinkles. "Never mind, never mind, Bessie darling, you'll soon be washed all white." No one ever before had heard him call her anything but Elizabeth; no one ever



Dr. George Hendric Houghton

From a photograph taken about the time the Church of
the Transfiguration was popularly re-christened
“The Little Church Around the Corner”

before had heard from him any hint that he desired to be any other color. His heart now spoke out its hidden emotions of love and longing.

She was buried from the church. So too, not a great while after, was her husband. Upon his death-bed, he called often to his wife: "I am coming—I will be along soon."

And now the people of this parish thought it fitting that, among the memorials of their own dead, there should be a memorial of the two door-keepers. Close by the entry at which they had stood for so many a Sunday, there was placed a fine specimen of American work in stained glass. The painting in the window represents the baptism of the Ethiopian by St. Philip. This is the inscription:

In Memory of George B. and Elizabeth Wilson,
Sometime Doorkeeper in this House of the Lord.

Psalm lxxxiv, 10.

That text reads: "For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

It would be interesting to know if, throughout the world, there is another white man's church in which there is a memorial of a colored man.

A PHARISEE LIFTS THE BUSHEL

IT is one of the little ironies of fame that the name of a man, famous in his day for the laughter he brought into the world, should be kept alive for posterity through an incident connected with his funeral.

It takes the oldsters of the present generation to remember that comic genius, George Holland, as a live figure behind the footlights, and even these oldsters can remember him only as a veteran, a man who had long outlived his contemporaries.

Holland was born in England in 1791, and it was not many years thereafter that he entered upon his long career of professional fun-making. "The audience laugh the moment he shows his face," a manager protested to Macready who wanted Holland to support him in a tragedy.

He came to this country in 1827, making his first appearance at the old Bowery Theatre. He made Uncle Sam laugh, just as he had made John Bull. He played in many cities, from Boston to New Orleans.

Holland's merriment was innate, an inseparable part of himself, a thing not reserved for professional

purposes on the stage but a characteristic of his everyday life. "His personality was essentially comic," wrote Joseph Jefferson, who knew him in his latter years, playing in the same company. "He lived, a bright and cheerful spirit, in this world for eighty years, for time could not age his youthful heart. He was the merriest man I ever knew."

Jefferson tells us that "practical joking was a passion" with Holland, and relates that

Some goldfish had been placed in the ornamental fountain in Union Square. Holland dressed himself in a full sporting suit, and with a fish-basket strapped upon his shoulder, a broad-brimmed hat upon his head, and a rod in his hand, he unfolded a camp-stool, and quietly seating himself in front of the fountain began to fish, with such a patient and earnest look in his face that no one could have supposed that it was intended as a practical joke. This strange spectacle soon attracted a curious crowd about the sportsman, who, with a vacant and idiotic smile, sat there quietly awaiting a nibble. A policeman soon forced his way through the crowd and arrested Holland, who explained with a bewildered look that he was fishing in his own private grounds. The policeman naturally concluded that the intruder was some harmless lunatic, and, patting him kindly on the shoulder, bade him go home to his friends. Holland burst

into a flood of tears, and while affectionately embracing the guardian of the law contrived to fasten the fish-hook into the collar of the policeman's coat, who walked slowly away, unconsciously dragging the line and rod after him. The crowd, seeing the joke, roared with laughter as Holland quickly made his way to the nearest omnibus, which he reached before the infuriated policeman could catch him.

An incident occurred during Holland's connection with the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, which is "an illustration of that active benevolence for which he was at all times distinguished." (I quote from Morrell's *Holland Memorial: Sketch of the Life of George Holland, the Veteran Comedian*.)

He had been in the habit of attending musical parties at the home of the leader of the orchestra, Mr. Lewis, who had been left a widower with two beautiful and accomplished daughters. His housekeeper, a colored woman named Mary, had a child some seven years of age, and the impression among the visitors to the house was that both were free. Lewis died suddenly. The executors discovered among his effects a paper for the emancipation of Mary and her child, but unfortunately it was without any signature. The executors were compelled to announce them for sale. In her distress, the poor woman ap-

pealed earnestly to all whom she had seen at the musical parties at the house to purchase her, but in vain. Holland was made of different stuff, and when appealed to, at once promised to advance the purchase money; this he found, upon inquiry, much more than he had supposed, but he was aided by a friend, who having once lived with a slave dealer, was posted in all the mysteries of that trade. "I will buy them cheap for you," he said. When they appeared on the block for sale, their dress and manner were so changed that they seemed forlorn and useless creatures. They were bid off for \$800, and thus Holland became a slave holder. He soon divested himself of the character, renouncing, as the legal instrument given to the poor creatures states, "all claim to their persons and services, freeing and liberating them henceforth and forever."

Many of us can be merry; some of us can practice kindness, in the obscure paths of life, even though the cost is big; but to only a few is given the great-heartedness to meet that crucial test—to realize that we are going into eclipse, a final eclipse, and not to be embittered. Joseph Jefferson in his *Autobiography* says of Holland:

He was quite an old man when I first knew him, and I had serious doubts as to whether our

acquaintance in the theatre would be an agreeable one; for by the terms of my engagement I was to hold a leading part as the comedian of the company, and he, who had always occupied that station, was placed as second to me. I naturally thought that feeling himself comparatively subordinate, and that I, a younger man, was to outrank him, he would, by his manner at least, resent my intrusion upon his former ground. I was, however, agreeably mistaken; for I found him too generous a man to harbor any jealous feelings, and to my gratification we were friends from our first meeting. It is pleasant also to know that this relationship extended over many years, and up to the day of his death.

Though he could “be a Cæsar within himself,” could keep the laughter in his voice, the old twinkle in his eye, his physical self could not refuse the toll of the years. Infirmities came upon him, and, fatal to his professional life, his utterance became indistinct.

During the season of 1869–70, he was without any engagement. He had raised a family of five, three sons and two daughters. This had prevented much provision for the future. The old man needed help, and Augustin Daly, who had just leased the Fifth Avenue Theatre, tended it in the form of an engagement for the season. Holland

eagerly accepted. He appeared in a number of plays, and the audiences were generous with their applause. He played his last rôle in *Surf*, but he played only the first night of its public production, his feebleness compelling Mr. Daly to relieve him of the part.

Sympathy was aroused. It expressed itself in a benefit performance. This was given at the Fifth Avenue Theatre on the night of May 15, 1870. The performance of the evening was *Frou Frou*. Between the first and second acts, the curtain was raised, and Mr. Holland appeared, leaning on the arm of Mr. Daly. "Enthusiastic plaudits." The old man took his seat in an arm chair, and the whole company gathered around him. Mr. Daly stepped forward to the footlights.

"At the last moment, Mr. Holland, who has represented so many characters in his time, finds it impossible to represent himself, and he has asked me to read you these words:

"'Ladies and Gentlemen': (Please now to consider that the veteran is speaking to you through his young manager, proud also to be his friend.) 'I have not often in my long career been troubled with stage fright; but I see so many kind faces turned toward me, I feel that my own worth is so small and your favor is so great, and my heart is so full of emotion, that the words that are needed for expression fail me. I am, for the time being, no longer a low comedian, but a heavy, blubbering

father. Instead of quips and cranks, I feel myself better fitted for weeping.’’

The curtain was rung down. The applause continued—insistent. There were shouts, “Holland! Holland!” What memories must have stirred of the years when those shouts, now voicing sympathy, were triumphal music! The veteran of threescore years upon the boards took his final “curtain call.” He tried to speak, but emotion mastered him. He could only utter a fervent “God bless you.” It was his last speech across the footlights.

On December 6, 1870, he wrote to Mr. Daly: “I have undergone the operation of tapping three times, viz., Sept. 12, Oct. 25, and Nov. 23, and now again require it. This is my seventy-ninth birthday.”

His physician, Dr. H. F. Quackenbos, “told him fully of the nature of his disease and the impossibility of its cure.” Holland answered that “he was aware of his condition, and that he only grieved at leaving his family in circumstances which, with all his labor and time, did not meet his desires.”

Five days before Christmas he died in his sleep.

Here is an excerpt from a half-column editorial, headed “Mr. George Holland,” that appeared in *The New York Times* on Dec. 22, the day of his funeral:

. . . Mr. Holland . . . lived to a great age—hard upon 80—with a stain on his name or the performance of any part in the drama of life over the memory of which those who loved him need blush. . . . He kept popularity, as well as commanded respect, and there will be thousands even of the rising generation to lament his loss. . . . He was gathered to his fathers, full of years and of honor. None could wish a better record, or desire a purer wreath than affection will twine around the old actor's tomb.

An hour or two before the funeral service old friends gathered at the Holland home, 509 Third Avenue, “to accompany the remains to the church. Joe Jefferson, Mr. Augustin Daly and Mayor Hall were among the first to arrive.” (I quote from newspaper accounts.) The body, “in a neat black walnut casket,” was borne “to the Church of the Transfiguration, in Twenty-ninth Street, near Madison Avenue. It was placed in the recess immediately inside the main entrance, and the cover being removed, the friends of Mr. Holland passed around it single file and took their last look at his well-known face.”

I will not quote the long list of the stage celebrities of the day who gathered in the church: only a few of the older generation would recognize them—the “stars,” long since dimmed and gone, of

tragedy, comedy, of black-faced minstrelsy, and burlesque.

The church indeed was completely filled by the members of the profession and persons on terms of intimacy with the deceased. The Rev. Dr. Houghton read the burial service, after which the casket was closed, and borne by six men to the hearse, the congregation following, the cortège wended its way to Cypress Hills Cemetery, and the body was laid in a lot belonging to the American Dramatic Fund.

It would seem that the end of the chapter had been reached.

The achievement of an actor is an evanescent thing—a thing writ on air—as transitory as a gesture, the sound of a voice, the flash of an eye. He leaves no material record of his art. When the curtain is finally rung down on his career, his fame fades with the passing of the generation that knew him.

But a little thing had happened—only a few moments' conversation, in private, between two men—and that little thing awoke a tempest that, within a few days after his death, carried the name of George Holland over the country as it had never been carried in his lifetime. Some of those who returned from that grave in Cypress Hills Cemetery, were as popular with the public as had been the

man they left there; yet, with two or three exceptions, their names are long since buried in oblivion. The tempest has long since died out, but it served to bring down to succeeding generations the name of George Holland.

That little thing—that few moments' conversation, in private, between two men—was dragged from its privacy, was told in public by *The Evening Telegram* of Dec. 28, a week after it had taken place. The next morning the great dailies retold it to their bigger publics. The telegraph carried it to every part of the nation. A conversation that had been encompassed by the four walls of a rector's study was now heard from Maine to Texas, from New York to California: THE REV. WILLIAM T. SABINE, RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE ATONEMENT, REFUSED TO BURY GEORGE HOLLAND FROM HIS CHURCH BECAUSE GEORGE HOLLAND HAD BEEN AN ACTOR, AND REFERRED THE DEAD MAN'S FRIEND TO A CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER.

That much—and it is the heart of the conversation—stands out clearcut, in agreement with the version of each of the two men who took part in that conversation. Joseph Jefferson in his autobiography gave his version; the Rev. William T. Sabine gave his in an interview printed in *The New York Times* on Dec. 29, 1870, the day the conversation was made public in the morning newspapers.

To quote Mr. Sabine:

"A gentleman [he did not know it was Joseph Jefferson] visited me on last Thursday, I think, and desired to have me officiate at a burial. He mentioned the name of one of my lady parishioners as a sort of introduction to me. I told him that I was willing to officiate at the funeral."

At this point comes the first divergence. According to Mr. Sabine:

"The gentleman subsequently said that it was fair that I should know all the circumstances, as he understood that some clergymen objected to taking part at the obsequies of a play-actor. He said that the deceased was a play-actor."

According to Mr. Jefferson:

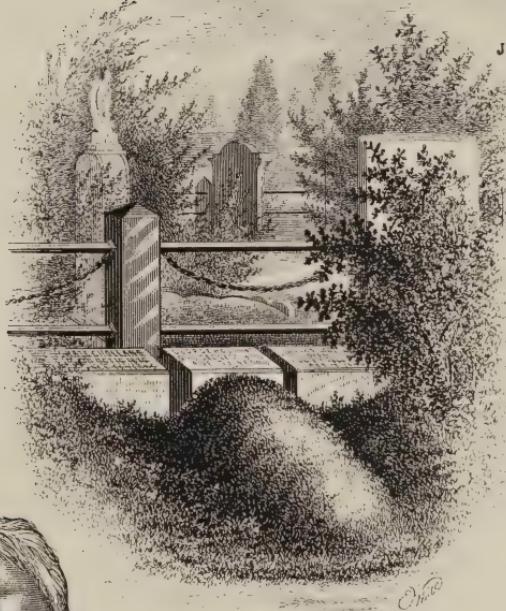
"Something, I can scarcely say what, gave me the impression that I had best mention that Mr. Holland was an actor. I did so in a few words, and concluded by presuming that probably this fact would make no difference."

To again quote Mr. Sabine:

"I said that I had a distaste for officiating at such a funeral, and that I did not care to be mixed up in it. I said to the gentleman that I



JOSEPH JEFFERSON



GRAVE OF GEORGE HOLLAND



GEORGE HOLLAND

The Rev. Mr. Sabine (having refused to read the burial service over the body of **George Holland** because **Holland** had been an actor): “I believe there is a little church around the corner where they do such things.”

Joseph Jefferson: “If that be so, then God bless the little church around the corner.”

was willing to bury the deceased from his house, but that I objected to having the funeral solemnized at church."

To *The Times* reporter's question if it is one of the laws of the Protestant Episcopal Church that a deceased theatrical performer shall not be buried from the church, Mr. Sabine replied:

"It is not; but I have always warned the professing members of my congregation to keep away from theatres and not have anything to do with them. I don't think they teach moral lessons."

Mr. Jefferson was accompanied by one of Mr. Holland's sons. Again quoting Mr. Jefferson:

"While his [Mr. Sabine's] refusal to perform the funeral rites for my old friend would have shocked under ordinary circumstances, the fact that it was made in the presence of the dead man's son was more painful than I can describe. I turned to look at the youth and saw that his eyes were filled with tears. He stood as one dazed with a blow just realized; as if he felt the terrible injustice of a reproach upon a kind and loving father. I was hurt for my young friend and indignant with the man—too much so to reply; and I rose to leave the room with a mortification that I cannot remember to have felt

before or since. I paused at the door and said: ‘Well, sir, in this dilemma is there no other church to which you can direct me, from which my friend can be buried?’ He replied that ‘there was a little church around the corner’ where I might get it done; to which I answered: ‘Then, if this be so, God bless “the little church around the corner,”’ and so I left the house.”

Here again there is divergence:

Reporter—Did you recommend Mr. Jefferson to visit any other clergyman?

Mr. Sabine—I told him that he might obtain the church around the corner from mine for the funeral service. I had read in the newspapers that funerals of actors had taken place at Mr. Houghton’s church.

Reporter—Did Mr. Jefferson, on hearing you announce that the Rev. Dr. Houghton might officiate at the funeral, say “God bless that little church around the corner.”

Mr. Sabine—He did not. I think his remark was “all credit to that little church.”

Edward Holland, the dead comedian’s son, who accompanied Mr. Jefferson, was between youth and manhood. He had recently begun his stage career, a member of the company at Wallack’s. To a *Herald* reporter he said:

"My brother-in-law's mother by marriage is a member of Mr. Sabine's church and my younger brother and sister both attend the Sunday school attached to it. We, therefore, thought, especially as the church is so near to our residence, that it would be best for Mr. Sabine to conduct the burial service. Mr. Jefferson and myself accordingly waited upon him and at first he assented to our request. But Mr. Jefferson told Mr. Sabine that Mr. Holland was an actor. Mr. Sabine at once replied that he would rather not have anything to do with the funeral."

Reporter—Did he say he would not bury him from the church, or that he would not even read the burial service over him?

Mr. Holland—That question was never raised. He said he had an objection to burying an actor, but added that there was a church around the corner where they were in the habit of doing such things, and that he would advise us to go there.

Reporter—Mr. George Holland was an Episcopalian, was he not?

Mr. Holland—Yes, sir; he was brought up in that communion.

A wave of indignant protest swept the country. Undoubtedly the popularity of George Holland had something to do with the intensity of the protest; so also had the fact that the refusal of the

rites of Christian burial came at the Christmas season, a time when kindness and brotherliness are in the hearts of men.

But the protest voiced something deeper, stronger, than emotionalism. It was a rebuke to intolerance, to bigotry.

The Franco-German War was at a critical stage; Congress was in session; pressure upon newspaper space was great.

The New York Times (then an eight-page paper) gave a half column upon the front page to the account of Sabine's refusal under the headline "Pharisaical Delicacy." On the same day (Dec. 29) this newspaper also printed an editorial that almost filled a column, entitled "A Sample of Priestly Intolerance":

. . . We may think what we please of any man's profession during his life—but to follow him with resentment after death on account of it, to pronounce a decree that he is fit only for the bottomless pit, and that no word of a Redeemer's love or of the resurrection should be pronounced over his grave—there is something so horrible in all this that we can scarcely believe it has really occurred in our own day and our own city.

Seldom has the press of the country been provoked to more bitter denunciation. "Sanctimoni-

ous Sabine," "canting Pharisee," "unfit to occupy the position he now holds," "a congregation composed of intelligent, Christian people, can not permit this man to linger about their altar"—these were voices in the chorus of condemnation.

On January 19, 1871, New York saw a thing which, I think, is without parallel in the history of the world: every theatre in the Metropolis opened its doors, actors and singers and acrobats and dancers in far greater numbers than could be used had volunteered their services, and the public coming in telling numbers—all this, a loving testimonial to a man who was dead, a stinging rebuke to a man who was living.

"On Thursday next" (I quote the *New York Herald*) "every theatre in this city, musical and dramatic, will unite in offering a tribute to the memory of George Holland, in that form which would have been, could he speak his wish, dearest to him—a contribution to the comfort and happiness of his home. . . . We confess that when we first called attention to the insult which has provoked, at least to a large extent, this uprising, we had hardly looked for a response so proud, . . . nor can it be soon forgotten that in the very manner of making it, the members of the theatrical profession display a charity, the gorgeousness of which offers a picturesque contrast to the uncharitableness it is intended to rebuke."

The theatres, and those who walked their boards,

on that by-gone Thursday—what ghosts of old New York are conjured by the mere names! Niblo's, Booth's, Fifth Avenue, Olympic, Wallack's, Wood's Museum, Bowery, Lina Edwin's, New York Circus, Academy of Music, Fourteenth Street, Grand Opera House—only a few have survived the half century, and those few tell the story of “changed times”: Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Joseph Jefferson, E. L. Davenport, Mrs. Davenport, Mme. Janauschek, John Brougham, John Gilbert, Mrs. Gilbert, Sol Smith, Mrs. Eldridge, Fanny Davenport, Clara Morris, Tony Pastor, Dan Bryant, Lydia Thompson—a small part of the roster of those who gave their services on that notable but long-forgotten Thursday.

New York was allowed no monopoly of the demonstration: there were “testimonial” performances in Brooklyn, San Francisco, Boston, Vicksburg and Washington, D. C.

Nor was the pulpit silent. Here there was some defence of Mr. Sabine, sermons preached in which the infamy of the stage was proclaimed. But I think the dominant voice was pitched otherwise.

. . . It ought to be a lesson; nor will its mission be rightfully concluded till the repetition of such a thing shall be impossible, and the spirit that dictated it shall be dead. This ill-wind has blown a deal of good, many ways. Can we do nothing toward encouraging it into

a whirlwind that shall clean church and heart of the black lingering shadows of such intolerance?

To a *Herald* reporter the Rev. Dr. Tyng, one of the leading Episcopal clergymen of the day, said:

"Mr. Sabine acted silly, but any one who knows him, as I do, knows very well that he acted conscientiously, and that there is not a more conscientious young man in the Christian Church or ministry than he is. But because he acted silly in this instance is no reason why the newspapers and the public should beat his brains out."

It may be that Mr. Sabine profited by the lesson; it may be that it taught him to broaden his conscience. Of this I know nothing. The record shows that he joined the Reformed Episcopal Church and died a Bishop.

His old church, the Church of the Atonement, has long since been demolished, forgotten. Whatever of good or ill Mr. Sabine did in the world, this fact stands out: he unwittingly lifted the bushel from "a little church around the corner."

AND THE LIGHT SHINES OUT

In those days the *Herald* printed every Monday morning a solid page of sermons that had been preached the previous day. They were plain, orthodox sermons, unspiced by rationalism, modernism, sensationalism, any of those things which give “news value” to a sermon today: the mere fact that a sermon had been preached in a prominent church made it worthy of newspaper space.

On Monday, January 2, 1871, four days after the Holland incident had been given to the public, two churches, hitherto inconspicuous, unnoted, got space on that page.

CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

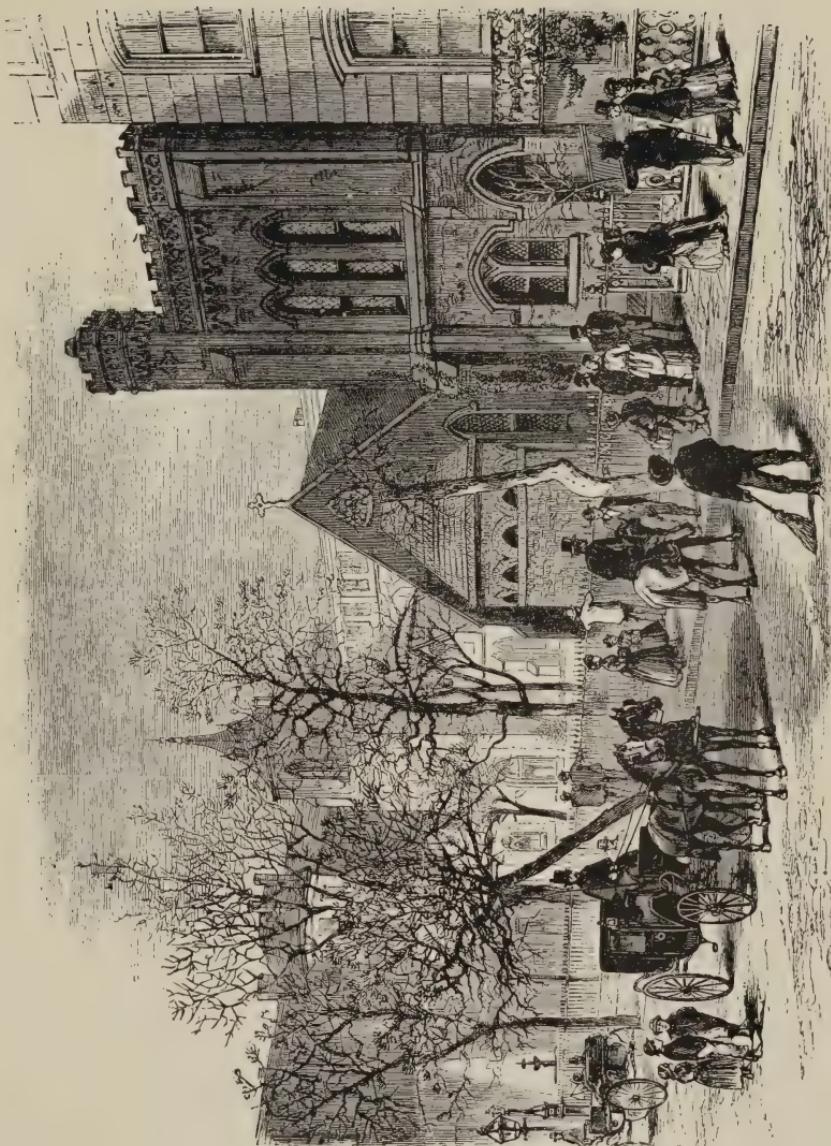
The “Little Church Around the Corner”—
New Year’s Service—What the Rev.
Drs. Houghton and Tyng Say About
Sabine’s Saintly Scruples.

That was the first application, in print, of the name, “The Little Church Around the Corner.”

Briefest mention that the sermon of the day,

The Church of the Transfiguration Gets into the Newspapers

Illustration from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* following the funeral of George Holland, the comedian



preached by Dr. Tyng, was in aid of the missions of the Church. Then:

At the conclusion of the service the *Herald* reporter waited on the Rev. Drs. Houghton and Tyng in the vestry. After some remarks on the missionary labors the conversation touched on the

SABINE SCANDAL.

. . . It was admitted all round that Sabine would be glad to hear no more about the matter. Dr. Houghton, however, seemed as much riled as a man of his mild temperament could be within fifteen minutes after morning service, at Sabine's would-be contemptuous remark that "there was some one in

THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER" who was in the habit of doing such things. He could see no harm in consigning any Christian to the grave with the rites of the Church to which he belonged. When Mr. Holland, Jr., and Mr. Joseph Jefferson waited on him in the matter a couple of days before the funeral, the latter said: "I think it right to inform you that the deceased was an actor," to which Dr. Houghton replied

"I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT."

He did not know at the time of Sabine's refusal, nor afterwards, until he saw it in the *Herald*. He supposed the way in which it was

believed that he was “in the habit of doing such things” arose from the fact of his having performed a similar service some years before for

A POOR GIRL, AN ACTRESS,

at the request of Laura Keene. They had, perhaps, remembered this, but he saw nothing in either act but that which his duty dictated. Dr. Tyng vigorously seconded this remark. Dr. Houghton then read a letter to himself from a member of an eminent publishing firm in this city, applauding his action and regretting that the reverend gentleman’s sacred profession prevented him from seeing

JOE JEFFERSON’S LAY SERMON

in the part of Rip Van Winkle. His wrath, if such a term may describe the quietest expression of disapproval possible, was directed against the reference to his church as a little one, “when,” as the Doctor remarked, “it will seat one thousand persons, two to one with Mr. Sabine’s.”

CHURCH OF THE ATONEMENT

**A Congregation Disappointed—No
Atonement for the Holland-Burial
Scandal.**

The pretty little Episcopal Church, on the corner of Madison Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street, “around the corner” from Dr. Houghton’s, was well filled yesterday morning. . . . There was a considerable number of strangers

present, drawn thither doubtless by the expectation of hearing the parson hold forth on a matter that gained him

A QUESTIONABLE NOTORIETY

last week; but if that was their object in attending they were entirely disappointed, for the preacher—the Rev. William S. Sabine—made no allusion whatever to his action regarding the funeral of the late George Holland. He took for his text the verse (from 1 Kings XX, 40), “And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the King of Israel said unto him, so shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it”; and on this he preached an orthodox sermon, showing what Christians may expect by minding their own business and looking out for the welfare of their souls.

Editorial opinion differed from the reporter’s conclusion: the Rev. Mr. Sabine’s New Year sermon was construed as a hint to the public that it should go about its business.

The poems that were published in the newspapers!

There has come to me quite a sheaf—a chance gathering—small part of the poetic outburst of the day.

Speaking of a poem written by Miss Anna Morris, published in *The Sun*, that newspaper says:

A copy was transmitted to the Rev. Dr. Houghton by the Count Joannes, in the name of the authoress, who was too timid from fear of appearing to arrogate to herself unusual merit in writing a theme upon which the reverend pastor has received hundreds from all parts of the country.

The authoress received this acknowledgment:

The Rev. Dr. Houghton begs to present his compliments and thanks to Miss Anna Morris for the copy of her poem, "God bless the Church around the Corner," which was received yesterday. It is certainly one of the very best he has seen upon the subject. God bless the authoress!

Most of them done by amateurs, metre halting,
lines cramped for the sake of rhyme; still, no one
can read them and remain unaware of the genui-
ness of the feeling that was their inspiration.

Of the sheaf that has come my way, I think the
best is

THE LITTLE CHURCH ROUND THE CORNER

By Tudor Horton.

It was thought of old, when a man was cold,
And dress'd for his last long journey,
A parson should come to direct him home
By clerical pow'r of attorney:

But one man of grace from a holy (?) place,
One who acts as a Gospel factor,
Could not condescend his breath to expend
O'er the corpse of a dead play-actor.
How could he have read all his Master said,
And turned from a sorrowing mourner,
With "Not in our way"? Perhaps it will pay
"The little church round the corner."

A soul with the stain and the brand of Cain,
When truss'd for the hangman's halter,
Is dismiss'd with grace to a holy place
By the sons of—the Christian altar;
But a man of worth, who has cheer'd the earth
By promoting harmless laughter,
Is thrust in the cold, from the sacred fold,
With no hope in the Great Hereafter.
But all are not lost of the Christian host,
So we'll silence the jeering scorner,
And honor pay one for an act well done,
At "the little church round the corner."

"The Little Church Around the Corner" was the favorite title; some of the others, "That Little Church," "Round the Corner," "Ye Priest and Ye Player," "The Poor Player at the Gate." They told how Christ never bade "one sinner seek for comfort 'round the corner'" nor told "the palsied, halt and blind" "go and find a Doctor—'round the corner.'"

And when the Saviour's voice shall call
Believer and the scorner,
May His love crown the glorious heart
That min'stered round the corner.

While he who shunned, unlike his Christ,
The Publican and Sinner,
May view the Heaven of nobler hearts,
From just around the corner.

Lyric celebration was not lacking. I believe a number of songs were composed: I have only succeeded in tracing two, the words of both by George Cooper, a popular song-writer of the day.* I give a verse and the chorus of each. They take us back, out of the age of jazz, to another day, when parlor singing was a favorite way of "entertaining company."

To Joseph Jefferson, Esq.
GOD BLESS THE LITTLE CHURCH.

1. God bless the little Church! Where truth and love abound,
Where Charity and Peace and Christian Faith are found!

* Since writing this, I have discovered two more: "That Little Church Around the Corner," by Alice Hawthorne, dedicated to Joseph Jefferson; "That Little Church Around the Corner," words by Dexter Smith, music by C. A. White, dedicated to Mrs. George Holland.

The sorrowing and poor
Have blest it day by day,
And never from its door
The Dead are spurned away!

**CHORUS: ARRANGED FOR SOPRANO, ALTO, TENOR
AND BASS.**

God bless the little Church!
God bless the little Church!
Good angels fold their wings of gold
Around the little Church!

A parlor organ, the “vox humana” stop drawn out, and (quavering soprano, uncertain alto, authoritative tenor, throaty bass) “Good angels fold their wings of gold around the little Church!” We can almost see the tidies and the lambrequins and the wax flowers under the glass dome.

THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER

1. God bless the little church around the corner,
 The shrine of holy Charity and Love;
Its doors are ever open unto sorrow,
 A blessing fall upon it from above;
The rich and poor are equal 'neath its portals,
 And be our path in life whate'er it may,
No heart that needed comfort in affliction
 Was ever turned uncomforted away.

CHORUS:

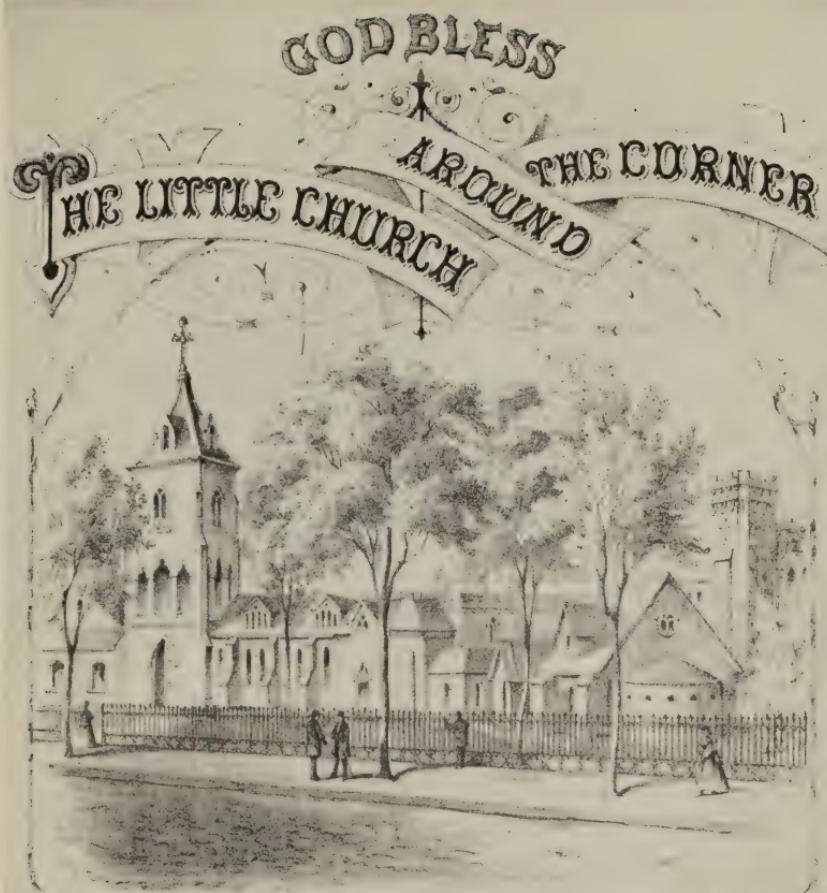
God bless the little church around the corner,
The shrine of holy Charity and Love;
Its doors are ever open unto sorrow,
A blessing fall upon it from above!

That song (music by D. S. Wambold) was one of the “hits” of the day. Wambold sang it with the “San Francisco Minstrels,” then sharing honors in the metropolis (it was the burnt-cork heyday) with Dan Bryant’s Minstrels. It spread to the stages of the “variety houses,” thence to the homes of the country. For a generation it was a popular “song for the parlor and piano.”

A lot of old folks, their memories haunted by a strain of the by-gone melody, have written me, asking that I unearth it and print it “in full, with the music,” in this book of *The Little Church*.

It must have been along about 1874 that the writer of this letter first heard of “*The Little Church Around the Corner*.” Anyhow, the hoop skirt and the chignon still were met with in nestling hamlets, and the stately bustle is remembered dimly as a feature of the upholstery.

It was at one of those bygone “sociables” where they used to sing songs and play “post office” and “snap and catch ‘em” and that delightsome old standby, “love in the dark.”



WORDS

BY

Respectfully
dedicated
to Rev. Geo. H. HOUGHTON

MUSIC

BY

Piano Song 5
Guitar Song 4
Instl by Jone 5

Geo. COOPER.

D.S. WAMBOLD.

New York, J.L. PETERS.
599 Broadway.

E. PEILER & BRO.
64 Prince William Street
ST JOHN, N.B.

J.L. PETERS & CO. St Louis
212 North 5th Street.

Cincinnati,
J.J. Dehmeyer & Co.

Boston,
White, Smith & Perry.

Galveston,
T. Coggan.

New Orleans
L. Grunewald

Philadelphia,
J. L. Duncanson & Son.

Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1854, by J.L. Peters, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress.

This Song, Sung by Wambold in Dan Bryant's Minstrels, Spread to the Variety Theatres, and from Thence to the Homes of the Nation.

It was One of the "Song Hits" of the '70s

One of the songs they sang that night was about The Little Church:

“God bless The Little Church Around the Corner,
A shrine of holy purity and love.”

I cannot remember any more of it after fifty years. Maybe you can get hold of it.

Perhaps you have noticed that in neither poem nor song was the church given its formal name, “The Church of the Transfiguration.” No mention whatever of that name: the public had rechristened it, “The Little Church Around the Corner.”

. . . The next Sabbath dawned bright and clear, but with a coldness in the air that chilled the “very marrow in your bones,” as our grandmothers used to say. As we approached the supposed neighborhood of the Church of the Transfiguration, and being a little puzzled to find it, Anaximander ran away to the opposite corner and interviewed a policeman.

“Can you tell me where to find the Church of the Transfiguration?”

“No; never heard of it,” he answered, amazed.
“Dr. Houghton’s church, then?”

“Never heard of that neither.”

“Tis a small, low, rambling church,” Anaximander went on to explain; “has a yard in front of it, filled with grass and flowers—very pretty in summer time.” But the “city guard” continued perverse.

“Well, do you know where ‘the little church around the corner’ is?” The policeman’s face brightened.

“Oh, yes, I know where that is—Twenty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue.”

“Thank you.”

(From a contemporary clipping, name of newspaper missing.)

Of course there were “special articles” describing the church and its pastor; and—what so seldom happens—the public learned that the picture conjured by its emotions, had a fit setting in reality.

. . . The church, with its adjoining chapel and rectory, is more interesting from its quaint irregularity and air of seclusion than for any architectural pretensions. Indeed, it may be said to have no architecture at all. . . . From time to time, as the congregation grew in numbers and wealth, additions were made by appending a little chapel at this end, a porch at that end and a wing at the side, until finally, the original building disappeared and gave place

to another equally quaint and plain. A glimmer of the Gothic seems to pervade the low, simple eaves, with here and there, in a short slender column or two, a shadow of the Arabesque, or something else; so that it is in vain to place the whole structure within the confines of any specific order of art. . . . With the row of trees in front, and the little churchyard between the buildings and the iron railing enclosing them, it would seem, were it not for the out-door bustle and life of the near avenue, much like one might imagine that little church wherein Tom Pinch was wont to play the organ near the residence of the architectural Pecksniff.

(From *The New York Clipper*.)

. . . The trees which the rector, with a wise foresight, set out twenty years ago, have grown to a goodly size, and among their branches hosts of English sparrows have found shelter, and in return for the favor shown them keep at bay the pest of cankerworms which once used to ruin the foliage. For the accommodation of these little pets, the rector has furnished

A BEAUTIFUL FOUNTAIN

at which they perform their ablutions and slake their thirst. Of a bright summer's day, when this fountain is sending up its showers of liquid diamonds, when the sun is shining, and the soft west wind breathing upon the trees and grass,

while the twitter of the swallows and the solemn sound of the organ from within the open windows fills the air, a more beautiful spot can scarcely be imagined. This charm of rusticity more than makes up for any imagined amount of architectural grandeur, and gives to the little church an attractiveness peculiar to itself.

Personally, Mr. Houghton is the very ideal of a pious, industrious, and efficient parish priest. He is of medium size, quick but not undignified in his movements, and in bearing and conversation

EVERY INCH THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

His hair and eyes are black, his features finely cut and expressive, his voice soft and winning. As a preacher he is not so much eloquent as instructive, while his reading and general manner of conducting worship are in the highest degree reverential and devotion-inspiring. . . . In the matter of looking after his parishioners individually he is unequalled for industry and thoroughness. . . .

IF HE HAS ANY FAULT,

it is that of too great zeal, and sometimes a soft-heartedness which allows him to be imposed upon. It was this mistaken kindness which led him a year ago to give an asylum in his church-yard to a number of stray and homeless dogs, who ungratefully repaid his hospitality by getting up a series of fearful fights in the night

time, one of which was graphically reported in *The Sun*. It is scarcely necessary to say that the nuisance was speedily abated, and that the church has ever since been, as it was before, the ornament and delight of the neighborhood.

(From *The New York Sun*.)

Dr. Houghton has been a hard-working man, distinguished for his labors among the poor, the unfortunate and the lowly. . . . Dr. Houghton attended the funeral of Holland, the actor, not to get fame, but simply because it has been his custom to labor with suffering humanity in all forms of wretchedness in this city. Except the laborers at Five Points he is better acquainted with the sorrowing ones of New York than any other clergyman. A distinguished organist took to drink to such a degree that he was unfit for his position. When everybody cast him off Dr. Houghton took him up and tried to save him. For several months he took care of him on Saturday nights, that he might be fit to play on Sunday and not become a beggar. A clergyman of very brilliant talents, of fine family connections, became intemperate, and was shunned and discarded by all. In his distress and disgrace, he called on the benevolent clergyman, who took him in, furnished him with a comfortable room in the tower of his church, gave him a chance to reform, and held on to him to

the last. Such a man would allow no human being to want for the consolation of religion while living, nor would he wound the feelings of relatives, however a man might die.

(New York correspondence, *The Boston Journal.*)

In a letter, acknowledging a poem, Dr. Houghton enclosed "a copy of a prayer from an English source, which I have had printed for distribution among the members of my church."

PRAYER

O, Almighty God, the Father and Saviour of all men, help us, we beseech Thee, to behave with Christian charity and wisdom to all that are in distress, poverty, or suffering. Let none of us come under Thy condemnation on the great day of judgment for want of mercy or charity to our brethren, who, in this world of trial, were hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and to whom when we had the power we did not minister. Help us to deny ourselves, that we may each in our measure have to give to them that need; and that we may ever work with Thee, and for Thee, in diminishing the sorrows, the miseries, and the sin of this evil world, for the sake of Him who suffered and died for all, Thy blessed Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A beautiful prayer, made an hundred-fold more beautiful by being not pulpit rhetoric but a creed of every-day life!

Said the Rev. J. F. W. Ware, in a sermon: "Public sentiment, roused to one of its indignant spasms, is just now lifting The Little Church Around the Corner into a passing notoriety."

No, Brother Ware; there was in that little church a spark of the divine fire—the bushel had merely been lifted.

“THE KINDLY FOLK”

HE was a small-town boy; he was fifteen years old; foot-loose in a big city; and he went to the theatre. That one visit brought him an hysterically tearful letter from a mother who thought she saw her son dallying with the road to perdition. Thereafter, he lived sixty-two years, the greater number of them in “the heart of the theatre district,” and never went to the theatre again. Yet his church became the actors’ church, appointed such by a spontaneous acclamation in which the heart, not the tongue, spoke. A unique parish, this of The Little Church among the stage folk—stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, stretching wherever the player people went wandering; their names, with few exceptions, not on the record of parish membership, no official ties, but those stronger things, the bonds of affection.

“My friends, the actors—God bless them!—hither bring their wives for the wedding, their babes for the baptism, their dead for the burial; hither come that their sick may be visited, their mourners comforted, their perplexities and troubles to be counselled and relieved.”

He called them, "the kindly folk."

Time and again he had to stand in his pulpit and exhort a congregation that included many of the wealthy, many of the socially elect, to open their purses for the sake of the needy. Time and again he had to tell "the kindly folk" to shut their purses.

The story makes good reading.

Let the Pharisee hearken.

If the Rev. Mr. Sabine was right, if, prior to the Holland funeral, there had been *a number* of funerals of actors at "the little church around the corner," the fact had not impressed itself on the officiating clergyman as it had on his neighbor. When Dr. Houghton talked to the *Herald* reporter, just after the New Year's service, 1871, he recalled *only one* such funeral—"a service some years before for a poor girl, an actress, at the request of Laura Keene."

Mrs. Keene was one of the leading actresses, in the 50's and 60's of the last century. Mention her name to a venerable theatre-goer—"Laura Keene?—Oh, yes; she was playing the 'woman lead' in Ford's Theatre, Washington, when Lincoln was assassinated." Fame sometimes hangs on odd pegs.

As a matter of fact, Dr. Houghton had officiated at least at one other such funeral. He recalled it in his "Forty-And-Five Years" anniversary sermon.

There was drawn to this Church of the Transfiguration an English woman of rare intelligence and cleverness, whose life had been a life of sorrow and disappointment. Through a long time personal ministry, the remembrance of that sorrow was greatly soothed and the burden of that disappointment was well-nigh removed, and that was accomplished without which there could not have been the death of peace and of gladness that followed. During a long illness, which poverty was making the more grievous, she was tenderly and abundantly cared for.

When she died she was buried by those with whom her lot in this country had largely been cast, members of the Dramatic Profession and Writers for the press. And these, full of sympathy and interest, were present in the rooms on a distant street where the Burial Office was read by the Rector of the Church of the Transfiguration. He well remembers the warm grasp of the hand and the grateful words of one and another of them.

Then came the Holland funeral, with its prologue of ministerial bigotry, its epilogue of public indignation.

To us, who are not of "the profession," who, moreover, must look across a half-century to another social environment, it is somewhat difficult to appreciate just what "the little church

around the corner" signified to the people of the theatre.

The Rev. Mr. Sabine spoke of Holland as "a play-actor." In that phrase, "play-actor," what an eloquent echo from the days when the strolling player was looked upon as a vagabond, fair game for grafting bailiff or ebullient village lad! The Rev. Mr. Sabine was far, very, very far from being the only one who regarded the theatre as "immoral," and theatre-folk as a Pariah crew.

I would not be surprised to learn that this attitude toward stage people has not entirely vanished; that it still survives in some small towns, in some small minds.

But this is certain: the actor is still a wanderer. Life is lived "on the road"—a thing of hand-baggage, sleeping car berths, time-tables, "junction" food counters, trunks, small-town hotels, boarding houses. Here today; gone—perhaps on "the midnight," perhaps in the bleak dawn, on "the milk train."

ST. PAUL, MINN.,
Nov. 18, 1923.

MY DEAR MR. MACADAM

Reading this week's issue of the *Billboard*, I notice you ask for something in regard to the Little Church Around the Corner. I am an old time actress—have been off the road for a few years—no pains or aches—just tired. I enclose

a writing I have had for years, hoping you will find it useful in writing your book. I thought it the grandest thing I ever read.

With good wishes

MAUDA F. BARNARD

45 years in the dramatic line.

I belong to the Actors Fund. Sometimes I wonder if I will ever reach the home. I get so tired of roaming around.

The poem she enclosed was one of that fifty-year old crop. Here is the last verse:

Ah, well! God grant, when with aching feet

We tread life's last few paces,

That we may hear some accents sweet

And kiss to the end, fond faces!

God grant that this tired flesh may rest

(Mid many a musing mourner),

While the sermon is preached and the rites
are read,

In no church where the heart of love is dead,
And the pastor a pious prig at best.

But in some small nook where God's con-
fessed—

Some little church 'round the corner.

The poem came to me, pasted upon a piece of paper, upon the back of the paper, mangled seg-
ments of time-yellowed "press notices"—mute
evidence that the old actress had rifled her scrap-

book, memorial tablet of a fading career, to make a contribution to the book of *The Little Church*.

On New Year's Eve, 1871, two days after the newspapers had published the story that told the difference between a Sabine and a Houghton, the actors in the Holiday Street Theatre, Baltimore, chipped in, bought a beautiful copy of the Bible, illustrated by Dore, and sent it as "a token" to the rector of *The Little Church Around the Corner*.

In a previous chapter mention was made of that remarkable demonstration on January 19, 1871, when all the theatres in New York united in **THE HOLLAND TESTIMONIAL**. It was for the benefit of the old actor's family, but in it the public voiced its condemnation of Sabine, its approval of Houghton.

A-top that, however, there was proposed a "testimonial" to Dr. Houghton himself. This was gently discouraged by the proposed beneficiary.

To quote from the editorial page of the New York *Evening Mail*, January 23, 1871:

"THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER"

An old friend, in whose judgment and taste we generally repose the utmost confidence, writes to us as follows:

If there is any truth in the statement of the Boston *Journal's* "Burleigh" that a testimonial

is being subscribed for the Rev. Dr. Houghton, I would suggest, if I were you, that it be devoted to carrying out a favorite idea of the Doctor's.

I know him and know that his church is his constant thought, and that he is always considering how he shall beautify it and make it more perfect in its symbolism.

For years he has had the idea of an ornamental gate to his church-yard, with a suitable inscription, and a well of water, with seats about it for tired and thirsty passers-by. I think he already has a design for it. Now, if we are going to buy anything for the Doctor, that, it seems to me, would be the thing, if he should consent. It would be a lasting monument to the good man's charity.

The suggestion that is made in the above communication will undoubtedly surprise Dr. Houghton, and will probably call out a favorable response from many who have recognized his broad Christian charity, but we fear that it would be unwise to press what has been hitherto a remarkably spontaneous movement any further. It is always well in such cases to stop just short of the point where an enthusiastic public sentiment finds itself somewhat exhausted and goaded on to effort by the mere sense of duty. And as to this particular case, we were a few nights since assured by one of Dr. Houghton's old-

est and most devoted parishioners that Dr. H. had been put in a somewhat awkward and embarrassing position by the enthusiastic demonstrations of his admirers, so that further and more marked tokens of good-will would be questionable favors. Dr. Houghton is a modest, quiet and conscientious clergyman, who never dreamed that what seemed to him the simple performance of a plain duty would make him the subject of universal newspaper comment and the special admiration of the entire fraternity of actors. . . . We believe that if his wishes were consulted no further testimonials would be proposed. He already knows that his name has become a "household word" in every part of the land, and that it is everywhere regarded as synonymous with a broad and tolerant charity. Further demonstrations would only provoke the comments of the censorious and annoy a modest and retiring Christian gentleman.

But Chicago, breezy, big-hearted Chicago, was not to be discouraged. It had something to say to Dr. Houghton. It said it.

CROSBY'S OPERA HOUSE

GRAND TESTIMONIAL

TO BE GIVEN TO THE

'Little Church Round the Corner,'

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, FEB. 16, AT 2:30.

Let the reporter of the Chicago *Tribune* tell what happened. Unfortunately, space compels deletion.

. . . Chicago has witnessed a great many crowds in places of public entertainment, but nothing to compare with that of yesterday. The hour fixed for the commencement of the performance was half past 2, but before 1 o'clock the crowd began to gather. From that time until 3 o'clock a living tide of humanity swept down Washington Street from every direction—men, women and children—blocking up the walks to State Street in one direction, and Dearborn in the other. All this time the entrance to the Opera House, and the broad, generous staircases, were packed with a mass of people so dense that locomotion became well-nigh impossible. Hats were smashed, dresses torn, articles of clothing dropped and trampled under foot, children crying, resolute ones pushing on, faint-hearted ones turning and vainly trying to get out again, some ladies shrieking, mothers and children separating and crying out for each other, policemen shouting and women fainting. . . . To add to the confusion, hundreds of people gained the box-office floor without tickets, and when it became evident that the house could not even possibly hold those who had purchased tickets, the box office was closed,

RY 16, 1871.

AMUSEMENTS.

CROSBY'S OPERA HOUSE.

GRAND TESTIMONIAL

TO BE GIVEN TO THE

'Little Church Round the Corner,'

Thursday Afternoon, Feb. 16, at 2:30,

Under the direction of

Jos. F. Wheelock, J. W. Blaisdell,
John W. Jennings, and Owen
Fawcett.

Treasurer.....G. W. GARRISON

The Opera House has been kindly tendered by Mr.
ALBERT CROSBY.

The following papers have given the gratuitous use
of their columns, viz.: Chicago Times, Chicago Tribune,
Republican, Evening Post, Evening Mail, and
the Evening Journal.

Order of performance, commencing at 2:30 precisely.

1. Overture.....Grand Orchestra

2. " Little Church Round the Corner,"

O. S. Fredericks, J. R. Kemble, V. A. Ber-
tram, J. J. Kelly, and J. F. Dunnin.

Leader.....C. Huoneman

3. Prof. Hazelmayr and his trained birds.

4. " Let Me Like a Soldier Fall,".....J. Bran Hall

Leader.....W. Mullaly

5. Tragic revival.....Wm. Rice and J. K. Campbell

6. Ciodoché dance.

Messrs. Hogan, Hughe, Rogers, and Martin

7. Eugene (a la Nilson), song, "Thou Art so Near and
Yet so Far."

8. Song and dance, " Let Me Be,"

Johnson and Powers

9. GUTTEN TRIAL.

Lawyer J. Heking.....Rob Hart

Sheenface.....Billy Manning

Old Snarl.....Ben Cotton

Judge Baunton.....J. R. Kemble

AMUSEMENTS.

To conclude with Buckstone's comedy of

MARRIED LIFE.

With the following original and powerful distribution
of characters:

ACT 1. Museum company, by the kind permission
of Frank E. Aiken.

Stage Manager.....F. L. Keller

ACT 2. McVicker's company, by kind permission of
Messrs. McVicker & Myers.

Stage Manager.....L. L. Sharpe

ACT 3. Globe Theatre company, by kind permission
of D. R. Allen & Co.

Stage Manager.....O. H. Wilson

General admission, 50 cents; reserved seats, \$1.

Tickets for sale at Root & Cady's music store, Western
News Agency, and at the Opera House.

Box sheet open at the Opera House, Monday, Feb.
12, at 10 a. m.

CROSBY OPERA HOUSE.

GRAND GALA MATINEE,

Saturday, Feb. 18, 1871,

BY THE

GERMAN OPERA,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE

Little Church Round the Corner.

THE ENTIRE OPERA OF

DAME BLANCHE.

Theodore Habelmann in his great Scotch character
of George Brown, in which part he will introduce his
celebrated song of "Robin Adair."

BETWEEN THE ACTS.

GRAND MUSICAL OLIOS,

IN English, Italian, and German.

Secured Seats, \$1 Only.

Tickets can now be obtained at Root & Cady.

After Pharisee Sabine Lifted the Bushel

In the early Autumn of the same year, Chicago was devastated by "the great fire." Said Dr. Houghton,
from his pulpit: "I would, brethren, that on this morning provision might here be made for
returning to Chicago as much at least as was placed in my hands in February last."

IT WAS.

thus leaving a crowd who must turn and attempt to go back. The result was that for a long time it made a perfect blockade, neither party being able to make any progress. The scene around the box office became very exciting. Men held up their money in the air, and offered ten, twenty, twenty-five, fifty, and even as high as seventy-five dollars to the doorkeeper to let them go through. . . . The pressure upon the box office at last became so great that the door was forced open, whereupon Mr. Garrison, the Treasurer, took his funds and, escaping through the window, made his way by the shortest route to the bank and deposited them—thus presenting to the astonished world the sight of a church, and that church nothing but a little church 'round the corner, with a deposit in a bank clear of all encumbrances and subject to its order.

. . . Every part of the auditorium was densely packed, hundreds of ladies standing up and sitting upon the aisle floors, while men stood on the window-sills, clung to stair-railings, and hung themselves up generally as wall ornaments. If there had been some clothes-lines stretched across the auditorium, a few more might have been accommodated. . . . There must have been over 3,000 people present, as the receipts foot up the splendid total of \$2,056.10, at fifty cents' admission, and one dollar for reserved

seats. Out of this sum, one hundred and fifty dollars will have to be deducted for expenses, leaving the Little Church, in round numbers, about \$1,900.

The committee representing "the dramatic and minstrel profession of Chicago," (it was not the managers, but "the profession" that organized the testimonial) in forwarding to Dr. Houghton a draft for \$1,907.10, wrote:

. . . We wish it were a larger amount; indeed, there is no limit to our good wishes for yourself and your church; but such as it is, we tender it with honest pride, as an evidence of the manner in which Chicago speaks her sentiments when thoroughly aroused. The money is placed at your disposal, to be devoted as you may deem proper, for the furtherance of that exquisite commingling of Christianity and human kindness which our Divine Master taught, and of which we regard you as a noble exponent.

Bread cast upon the waters! but the days were not many, when it was returned.

In the early Autumn, Chicago was devastated by "the great fire."

The Sunday following that catastrophe, Dr. Houghton announced:

"The offerings this morning, brethren, will be

appropriated for the relief of those now suffering from the recent visitation of Divine Providence in the city of Chicago. It is not the intention to make any appeal in their behalf. An appeal surely is not necessary, and the impression which has already been made could not be deepened. But there is one circumstance which I desire to recall

He spoke of “the kindly folk” of Chicago who had “stretched forth their open hand with a generous gift. It was the desire of those who sent it that this money should be used for the benefit, in some way, of this, our Church. I constituted it, however, a Charity Fund, and laid it out, in behalf of those from whom it came, in meeting some of the manifold applications which are here continually made by the sick and the needy. A portion of it went abroad to aid in relieving the famine-stricken multitudes in France. Other portions were distributed to a number of impoverished parishes in various States of the Union. There is a baptismal font in Ohio; there is a Sunday school library in Virginia; there are gas-fixtures in South Carolina which were therewith provided. And here in New York the remainder was used for the Children’s Hospital; for St. Barnabas House; in providing shelter and food and clothing for the poor and the sick; and in burying the dead. Indirectly our own church failed not to be benefited, inasmuch as its insufficient income had else been

taxed to meet some of these applications—it being almost impossible within these doors to send any empty away who come to ask an alms in the Name of the Lord. I would, brethren, that on this morning provision might here be made for returning to Chicago as much at least as was placed in my hands in February last."

It was.

The money was sent to Chicago with the request that it be used to relieve the immediate necessities of people of the stage.

On a Sunday morning, in the Autumn of 1882, Dr. Houghton went to his Sacristy, to prepare for the seven o'clock Celebration. He discovered that thieves had entered the church during the night, and carried off five sacred vessels: a large silver flagon, the gift of a mother, in memory of her daughter; a silver, gold-lined chalice, the gift of a daughter, in memory of her mother, the latter's wedding ring being imbedded in the knob; a silver, gold-lined paten and a silver, gold-lined box for holding the sacramental breads, both memorials to a mother; and a small paten used in giving communion to the sick, the gift of a woman employed by The Little Church to visit among the poor.

The newspapers printed an account of the burglary. Immediately, one of the theatrical publications proposed a subscription to cover the loss.

To a parishioner, an able and willing lieutenant in time of any need, Dr. Houghton wrote:

I greatly appreciate everybody's kindness, but anything of the sort proposed would greatly distress me. There is no reason in the world why anything should be done by anybody as regards the silver.

If my good theatrical friends will let me serve them a great deal more while there is time; send for me when sick, and hold me in the same kind regard that they do now, I do not want anything more.

Will you kindly see our good friend, Mr.—[the editor of the theatrical publication] and delicately put the matter before him. I cannot think anything of the sort is seriously contemplated. I should deprecate it so much, and it would distress me beyond measure.

In his Forty-fourth Anniversary sermon, Dr. Houghton stated that the year's disbursements for charities had been very large, exceeding the income appropriated for the purpose; that there was a deficit in the church treasury of \$2,300, which sum included a balance of \$1,000 due the Rector. The mention of that "balance of \$1,000," was, I feel quite sure, thrown in, as a thistle, to arouse lethargic church members.

This insufficiency of the income for the year was due to the fact that while there had been no lessening of the charities and of the work of the Church there had been the usual failure on the part of many who avail themselves of the ministrations of the Church to make any or any adequate return for those ministrations, notwithstanding their abundant ability.

Those who have not the ability to make return are always most welcome to those ministrations without return—except that of their love and prayers.

(From a letter, written a few months later, thanking “my friends of the dramatic profession.”)

An actor, who heard the sermon that Sunday morning, wrote to the *Dramatic News*, suggesting that “the profession come to the aid of the church and raise the necessary money to pay off its debts.” There was some talk of a benefit performance, but first an appeal for contributions was made direct to “the profession” itself.

. . . Of course, the regular parishioners of the Church of the Transfiguration can easily make up that small amount. Several of them could give a check for it and never miss the benefaction. But the theatrical and musical pro-

fessions are especially the parishioners of Dr. Houghton. To him they go in all their troubles. He marries them; he baptizes their children; he buries them. And we may add confidently that there would be no deficit in the treasury of the Church if he did not so zealously devote himself to this good work. Church members are the most prejudiced persons in the world, and many of the members of the Little Church Around the Corner have protested against the use of the sacred edifice for professional ceremonials and the attentions paid by the Rector to actors and actresses who are not communicants.

. . . The constant ministrations of Dr. Houghton to professionals are not recorded in the newspapers, but by the angels, though they deserve no less praise.

Before sunset the actors and actresses of New York should send a message to Dr. Houghton pledging themselves to raise by Nov. 1, the \$2,300 for which he asks, and to make it a round \$5,000, as a testimonial of their love for him personally, and their respect for the church which he represents. . . .

. . . Professionals owe an infinite debt of gratitude and love to Dr. Houghton and the Little Church Around the Corner, and here is their golden opportunity to pay off \$2,300 worth of it with compound interest.

(From *The Spirit Of The Times.*)

This Forty-fourth Anniversary sermon, as was often done with those yearly addresses, was printed as a pamphlet, and distributed among the parishioners. A copy reached *The Sun*, and provoked an editorial.

. . . The Church of the Transfiguration is endeared as the "Little Church Around the Corner" to the theatrical profession particularly, and generally to everybody to whom the sublime principles of Christianity appeal with the force which they must always exert in the world.

Dr. Houghton, its rector, is a clergyman to whom the heavily laden go with an instinctive confidence in his obedience to that pure and beautiful law. We are told that he confesses more sinners, and they are the worst sinners, than any priest in New York, the Roman Catholic priesthood excepted. In the Episcopal Church he is known as the strictest of Churchmen. Nothing can change him from his convictions. But in his humanity Dr. Houghton has no restrictions. . . . There is no place so vile that he will not go to it as a minister of religion, and there is no outcast so abandoned that his soul does not see in him ground fit for the cultivation of a rich spiritual crop.

We are surprised, therefore, when we read this

circular, so modest and so self-effacing, from which it appears that this clergyman is hampered in his efforts by a small deficiency of pecuniary means. For forty-four years, he tells us, he has been conducting services at the Church of the Transfiguration, and he makes grateful acknowledgment of what seem to be petty gifts for its continuance and enrichment, petty considering the great benefit his ministrations have bestowed.

It is a shame to the public that this good man has been compelled to issue such a circular. Twenty-three hundred dollars! Give him twenty-three thousand!

Dr. Houghton was in an embarrassing position: the statement that there was a deficit in the church treasury, was meant only for the ear of the congregation, its publicity was unexpected; he did not want a "benefit," nor the solicitation of contributions; but to check the activities of the kindly inclined is a delicate task.

To the editor of the *Dramatic Mirror* he wrote:

1 EAST 29th STREET
Oct. 19, 1892.

MY DEAR MR. FISKE:

You are quite right in thinking and saying that I thoroughly deprecate the solicitation, on

the part of any one, of money for the Church of the Transfiguration.

I never make personal appeals myself to my parishioners or to any one else, and certainly do not wish any one to make such appeals for me. They would be thoroughly distasteful to me.

Voluntary contributions, made in the ordinary way, are quite another thing.

Yours very sincerely
G. H. HOUGHTON.

The mail delivered at the Rectory in East Twenty-ninth Street, increased in volume; begging letters went into temporary eclipse. "Very many and touching were the letters that came," said Dr. Houghton from his pulpit, making public acknowledgment to the "generous souls of these professions, the dramatic and the press." He quoted one letter.

LANGHAM HOTEL, BOSTON
Oct. 27th, 1892.

MY DEAR DR. HOUGHTON:

I have heard that the Church of the Transfiguration is in some financial difficulty, and the enclosed check for two hundred and fifty dollars is a little contribution made up by my sons, George, Edwin and Joseph, and myself. While

I regret the sum is not larger, I hope it will be accepted with our love and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

CATHERINE HOLLAND.

The fund raised by the *Dramatic News* amounted to over \$3,300, "the contributions coming from many of the travelling companies in all parts of the United States, as well as from the actors and actresses in New York."

On Tuesday morning, December 6, at seven o'clock, I placed the gift of my friends of the dramatic profession upon the altar in their name and behalf, invoking the divine blessing upon each one who had any part in the matter.

My friends have given more than the sum named in the notice, but not more than shall be well used for the glory of God and the good of our fellows. So may God vouchsafe to them in the last day His mercy and blessing more abundantly than they can ask or think.

It would be interesting if someone, acquainted with the theatrical names of the '70s and '80s, could go over the old church records, to the end that we might know the actors and actresses who sought The Little Church in the hour of their happiness, those who were borne there by mourning comrades.

I have only a few isolated clippings. Their value on this topic is chiefly in what they tell indirectly.

Mark Smith, a popular comedian, died abroad in 1874. Just before the vessel bearing his body arrived in New York, a memorial meeting was held at Booth's Theatre.

. . . Everything happy that was said was received with demonstrative recognition. But not until the Rev. Mr. Houghton's letter was read did the feeling of the audience reach its acme. When Mr. Wallack pronounced the words "pastor of our little church around the corner," thunders of applause broke forth. The letter was one of condolence with the profession at the loss they had sustained; and it contained a clipping in poetry, which Mr. Wallack requested Mr. Clark to read. The poem was one most apposite to the occasion, and the reading heightened its effect.

The Chair suggested that the Executive Committee should exercise their own discretion in making the necessary arrangements for the reception of Mark Smith's remains; "and," said he, "I do not think I need further suggest that it would please us all to have the body of our friend and brother buried from our beloved 'Little Church Around the Corner.'"

After the applause that greeted this sentiment



HARRY MONTAGUE



AS "CAPTAIN MOLYNEUX"
IN "THE SHAUGHRAUN"



MEMORIAL WINDOW

The Montague Memorial Window in The Little Church Around the Corner
The man, and one of his Characterizations

had subsided, the Chairman declared the meeting adjourned.

In its account of the funeral, *The Times* spoke of The Little Church as one "which has become so noted in the history of theatrical funerals."

This was in October, 1874, less than four years after the funeral of George Holland!

Edwin Booth, Lester Wallack, Joseph Jefferson, Harry Montague—some of the actors who attended worship in The Little Church.

When Montague died, it was suggested that as a memorial, "a statue bust" be placed in the lobby of Wallack's Theatre. To "the profession" of that day, Wallack's Theatre was one of the fixed, immutable things of Manhattan Island. But its sun dimmed—Wallack's is a thing of the past—gone. Fortunately, its lobby was not chosen as Montague's Valhalla. Instead, a memorial window was placed in The Little Church. It is directly opposite the pew which he used to occupy. It represents a pilgrim, with his staff and scallop shell. Upon a brass plate below are inscribed the actor's name, the date of his death, and the words:

If I ask Him to receive me will He say me nay?
Not till Earth and not till Heaven pass away.

A page torn out of what, in our school days, we called a "composition book." The paper is

creased, showing that it had been folded, as school children fold their "notes." Written in pencil:

HARRIGANS THEATRE
35th ST & 6th AVE.
Jan 7th, 1891

REV. DR HOUGHTON

Dear Sir

We will bring the remains of our Dear departed Brother, the late Chas. T. White. to our beloved little church Around the corner Thursday between 12 & 1 OClock, please send the bill to Mr. Edward Harrigan

Yours very Respcy
HARRY A. FISHER
Stage Manager
JOHN WILD

In its simplicity, its informality, eloquent token that Dr. Houghton was indeed the spiritual father of the stage folk.

An actor urged him to attend a performance.

"If you were in trouble, sick or on your death-bed, where would you expect that I should be found—in the play house, or here, in my appointed place, about my Master's business?"

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A Note to Dr. Houghton

Written in pencil, upon a page torn out of what, in our school days, we called a "composition book"; the paper creased, showing that it had been folded as school children fold their "notes"

24-CARAT CHRISTIANITY

If a man wants bread, he goes, without question, without misgiving, to a bakery. If he wants kindness, charity, consolation, encouragement, spiritual help, it would seem that he should go, equally without question, without misgiving, to a church. The greater his need, the greater should be his confidence that that need will be replenished.

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

And when the Pharisees saw IT, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?

But when Jesus heard THAT, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

To one who stands upon the sidelines of the religious field, it is an illuminating commentary upon the Christianity of the churches, that the Holland incident (the Christian burial of an actor whose body had been refused Christian burial in another church) should have served to publish to

the world that there was to be found in *The Little Church Around the Corner* what should, as a matter of course, be found in every church.

That incident drew toward the Church of the Transfiguration a world of kindly, tender feeling; and it opened wide for personal ministration and usefulness such a door as few of you may imagine. It convinced many a one who had known nothing of the Church—not this Church of the Transfiguration in particular, but the Church in general—and her Clergy, many a most wretched outcast, that hither he or she could come, and find a heart, a hand and an ear ever open, and a Priest's lips that could keep knowledge—could keep to themselves, as in honor and duty bound the knowledge confided to him.

From the Prison and the Gambling house and the house of Ill-repute, the message or the messenger has hither come that might not have elsewhere gone. God's blessing has rested upon this our Parish and Church by reason of the effort made to make the most of the greater opportunity thus offered for ministering to those who had need.

(From the Thirty-ninth Anniversary Sermon.)

Like a physician to the body, this physician to the soul had a night bell and a speaking tube. At midnight, at dawn, at any hour that the call might come to minister to the dying, he went without

hesitancy into the resorts of the old “Tenderloin,” then at its most lurid period.

Deaths in gambling houses are usually those of violence—suicide, or a hasty knife or revolver. What a picture!—that little group of men suddenly checked in their games of chance, sobered, solemn, as they watch that final “cashing in”—the dying man—the kneeling priest—“O Almighty God, we humbly commend the soul of this thy servant, our dear *brother*, into thy hands.”

Even grimmer contrast, when Death visited the Daughters of Joy!

I can never forget the almost despairing cry of a dying woman, which I heard many, many years ago in a house of ill-repute. She was a member of the Church, had been brought up in the Church, was at one time a prominent member of a Church choir, had been married, was the mother of two children, and was now the keeper of this house, and her daughter an inmate of it.

It was long past midnight when I had been called to her. As I stood by her dying bed—she died very soon after I came to her—she cried out so piteously, so almost despairingly: “Oh, my Saviour, my Saviour, do not, do not forget me now that I am dying, though I have forgotten Thee so many, many years!”

I buried her here, in the chapel end—the west end of the Church—the inmates of the house

forming the congregation, and the daughter having promised me that she would not return to her former life.

In the midst of pestilence, Dr. Houghton held the head of the pestilence-smitten for the receiving of the Sacrament.

His seven-day-a-week creed: "In the personal ministry of mercy and blessing, no sin, no degradation, no sickness, no possible peril, should be a barrier to that ministry."

There is a phrase in the passage quoted from the Thirty-ninth Anniversary Sermon, that should have been italicized: The outcast could go to The Little Church "*and find a heart, a hand and an ear ever open.*" It is to that "open hand" that I want to draw attention. It didn't hold a tract: it held, sometimes money, sometimes clothing; a hand that was ever-ready to hold a pen and write letters to the relatives of "black sheep," to prison officials, to Governors who had the power of pardon, to men who might give employment; a hand intimately related to a head that was ever-ready to think out plans for material betterment, intimately related to a pair of legs that were ever-ready to travel miles if that travelling might be of benefit to a brother-man.

Strict theologian, High Churchman, a man to whom God and His Heaven were the imminent facts of life, overshadowing all else; but one who,

in his efforts to help the down-and-outer, never forgot that man has a stomach. He did not feel his duty done if he told the outcast of "the pearly gates"; he tried to open the door to a job. Practical humanitarian—faithful follower of the Man of Galilee!

"I pity the man who has never been taken in," he once said to a friend.

Most of us are willing to take the chance of snapping our purse in the face of Poverty, lest we be taken in by a faker. Dr. Houghton played the odds the other way about. Very likely his policy is unsuited for the guidance of the layman who lives in a world where fakery abounds, where the faker must be discouraged; but a policy that is admirable in one who is the apostle of Him who taught that if a man takes your coat, give him also your cloak, an apostle whose mission on earth is the saving of souls for the harvest of heaven.

STATE PRISON,
TRENTON, N. J.
April 18, 1873.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR

I take the pen to write these lines to you with a broken heart and am afraid that I am almost too vile of addressing you, but if there is a place on earth, where I would like to kneel down before my God, next before my old mother's knees, it would be in that little Church of which you are the pastor.

All my friends live in Germany, I am alone in this Country and last Monday was sentenced to six years State Prison in Trenton.

I do not wish you to think that I am a man whose life has been habitually given to the breaking of the law. Misfortune first in business and finally to keep up the appearance of a gentleman a little while longer and the insane desire to live in fashionable society has been my ruin.—I did fall.—Personally I have not the pleasure of being known to you, but often I have been in your Church knowing that my life must lead to ruin, communing with God when the organ so beautiful was playing, have often on a Sunday made up my mind to go and see you and ask you to save me, shame and fear has prevented me from doing so.

As I can not believe and do not hope that I shall survive this ordeal, as my health is but poor, as I had none to whom I could fly, I have come to you, will you write me a letter in which you give me a few words of consolation, and one request I have more, it will come sooner or later at the moment of Death will you send for me my last message to my old, old parents and break it gently to them, it would be a consolation to me to know that there is one heart this side of the ocean who understands me, and I know you will understand me.

Father and mother both are very aged, the

tears my darling old mother will weep, if she hears of this, will leave their traces forever upon the heart from which they flow. My old papa has studied Theology, and now is the Director of a College pious beautiful old folks they are.

The fear that they will go to the grave with the cruel thought, that him they loved best has been lost to them forever is almost unbearable, but He who shapes all our destinies will be near me and them. I have no family. Today I have been brought to Trenton, the last times I shall see a flower, from now unto death, nothing but shame and misery, never to see once one face that has been dear to me, and as the load of my shoulders is so heavy, as all night long I have been thinking of the Little Church Around the Corner, I could not help writing to you, I have all night been thinking of the words how true: Of all sad words from tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it *might* have been. If I taken too much liberty pardon me, and Sunday if a thought of me should cross your mind, remember me before Him who sees in our hearts.

With sentiments of highest regards

Respectfully

JOHN NEMO

(Here, as in all other letters quoted in this chapter, I use a fictitious name.)

To me, the letter does not ring true. Perhaps it did not ring true to Dr. Houghton. But—

The return mail carried an answer. There was a trip to Trenton; a talk between convict and clergyman. Then a letter went from the Rectory in Twenty-ninth Street, to the home in Germany. It brought this answer:

46 GARTNERSTRASSE, . . . ,

REV. DR. HOUGHTON

DEAR SIR,

I received your lines in due season and am full of gratitude toward you for your kind interest, you take in our trial. I am pleased to hear that my brother gives satisfaction by his conduct. In his letters I miss the confession of his sins and a contrite heart and it is my fervent wish that his lamentations are not the result of his present imprisonment but the repentance for his past sinful life. In case you should succeed by your influence to get my brother's pardon, my Papa wishes you to know that my brother is *not* to return to Europe, he has no prospect for a future career here; if his leaving America is the condition for his pardon, we wish him to go on board of a ship and work for his passage to another part of the World of the South of America. If still allowed to him, it is our wish he goes to the far West of America

and seeks his livelihood by his hands' work, but away from New York or the large cities at any rate. My Papa is willing to send to you money to the amount of \$40, of which you will kindly dispose for your own expenses, you have had; travelling expenses to send my brother away or the most necessary wants he may have. We did the very same some years ago, but against our will he staid near New York and continued his sinful life. Years full of sorrows about my brother, sad experiences by his want of diligence, energy and honesty, make us write this, dear Sir, don't judge us hard; much love, he has experienced, much forgiveness was granted him, our prayers is the only help we may offer him still.

Will you most kindly write me again, when you wish to have the money sent, we are thankful for the decision you take for the future career of my poor, lonely brother. It is a great comfort for us to know, that he stands under your influence. Praying God that He may reward you for what you do for us, and that it might become a real blessing for John, I am, dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely
EMILY NEMO.

A black sheep who had exhausted the hope of those whom he had truthfully described as "pious beautiful old folks." But—

As long as those penitentiary walls held him, he

had an occasional visitor. When liberation came, he went, as his visitor had told him to go, "right straight to the Rectory door in Twenty-ninth Street." Employment was found for him, and he was asked to "drop in now and then for a little talk." A while and the visits stopped. The absence lengthened into weeks. Then a letter came from him—he was in Sing Sing. New crimes had landed him there. The letter brought his assurance that his greatest sorrow was his failure to keep the promises made to Dr. Houghton, and his fear that Dr. Houghton would now desert him. But—

That letter brought him the old visitor. The convict was naturally of a delicate constitution. The new stretch of penitentiary life sapped his small stock of strength. Not many months and it became apparent that he had only a short time to live. Dr. Houghton was anxious that the end should come outside prison walls: he drew up a petition to the Governor, had it signed by many to whom he personally presented the case, himself carried the petition to Albany. In answer to his urgent appeals, a pardon was finally granted.

Two days before the time named for the pardon to become effective, there came a letter from the warden, saying the man was ill with pneumonia, so ill that he could not be moved for the present. The next morning, a telegram: condition critical—death likely in few hours—great desire to see his friend once more. Boarding the first train, Dr.

Houghton reached the man's bedside in time for recognition, the saying of a prayer and the Blessing. Those kindly hands closed the eyes for their long, last sleep.

Arrangements for removing the body to New York were at once made. In the baggage room of the New York Central Railroad, baggagemen standing with bowed heads, the Rector read the Burial Office. The body was interred in Consecrated Ground, in St. Michael's Cemetery.

To the parents in Germany, a letter was written telling them of their son's death, assuring them of his repentance and final trust in God. In due time, a letter to the Rector, full of gratitude for his ministry to their wandering boy. Could they ask one thing more? money was enclosed for a marble slab.

A stone stands at the head of the grave of a man who lived a black sheep, but who, according to the Faith, was saved to the Fold.

The Sunday morning after the receipt of the first letter from the convict in the penitentiary at Trenton, Dr. Houghton read the letter from his pulpit. He explained that the letter was thus made public, because there might, by chance, be someone in the church beset by the same temptations that had started this man on the path to the penitentiary, someone who might be strengthened by sympathy and advice. If any such there were,

he urged that there be no delay in coming to him.

After the congregation had dispersed and the Rector was in the Sacristy, removing his vestments, there was a tap at the door. A young man, a stranger, entered. He said that he had chanced to drop into The Little Church that morning, had heard the letter read, and—had come to talk with the Rector.

Little by little, the story came out: the theft of money from his employer, his daily expectation of discovery, his agony of mind, his uncertainty what to do.

The Rector's advice: "Face it like a man." Satisfied of his penitence, of his desire to go right, he told him that he should go to his employer, confess his wrong, and abide the results.

But he did not leave him to face the ordeal alone. The next morning, Monday, he went with the young man to the employer in Jersey City. The penitent told the story of his theft; the clergyman urged that he be given a chance to make good; the employer gave him the chance, letting him retain his job.

In weekly installments, the stolen money was returned. A man, barely over the threshold of his career, had been saved from the penitentiary.

In the preceding chapter I told of the theft of five sacred vessels from the Sacristy, and the publication of the robbery in the newspapers.

A few days later, two men called at the Rectory and asked for a private interview. They then introduced themselves as professional burglars. Then: "We don't believe anyone in the profession was mean enough to steal that silver." They said something about gossip in the underworld—how those who are its citizens get wind of who committed this, that or the other crime, just as Wall Street men get wind of who negotiated this, that or the other deal. "If we're wrong, if it was a professional who pulled off this robbery, we are sure to find the man. We'll kill that kind of a dirty sneak." But that wasn't what they had come to say: they wanted to assure Dr. Houghton that if they could locate the silver, they would see that it was promptly returned. The Rector's part in this conversation is unrecorded.

Shortly after this visit, a letter, mailed in Jersey City, came to the Rector. The writer said that he knew where the silver was and who had stolen it, and that he might be able to return it. He asked for an interview at the Rectory, making these conditions: that the day and hour be fixed in advance, that the appointment be punctually kept, that no one but the Rector should be present. In a reply, speedily dispatched, the conditions were agreed to.

Upon the appointed day, exactly at the appointed hour, the Rectory door-bell rang. Dr. Houghton had already told the maid not to answer the

bell at that hour. He went to the door himself. His visitor, a shabbily dressed man, pale, emaciated, apparently a consumptive, was taken to the "above-stairs study," the door closed.

The man said that he had nothing to do with the robbery; but that the burglars were friends of his. He told where the silver was deposited; that the intention was to melt it down; but that he could return it to the Church uninjured if he were given twenty-five dollars to take to those with whom the silver was deposited.

Dr. Houghton was inclined to put faith in the man, but decided to see if he would keep faith in the matter of a second appointment. He named a day and hour, to which the man agreed.

When he saw his visitor to the Rectory door, he discovered that a hard rain had come on.

"Here; wait a moment; you must not go out in such weather as this without an umbrella." He reached into the umbrella stand. "Take mine."

"Why Doctor, would you trust me with a silk umbrella?"

"Trust you? why of course. Take the umbrella—and take good care of yourself: you seem to be far from well."

At the appointed time the man returned. He brought the umbrella with him. He expressed gratitude, not so much for the loan, as for the Doctor's confidence in him. Preliminaries were settled and a check for twenty-five dollars written.

Then they went together to a near-by hotel where the check was cashed, the money handed over.

It was a cold autumn day. The man was very thinly clad. He looked even more miserable than at the first meeting.

As they were parting, Dr. Houghton said:

"I'm afraid you are a very sick man. You certainly are not properly protected from the cold. Now you must put on my overcoat."

Dr. Houghton started to take it from his shoulders as he spoke.

Tears came into the man's eyes. But he remonstrated:

"Oh Doctor, I could not do it—not out here in the street. What would people think?"

"Well then, come back to the Rectory with me and put it on in the hall."

And from the Rectory the intimate of thieves departed under the protection of the Rector's great-coat.

Day after day went by, and there came no tidings of the silver. Dr. Houghton believed the man was ill, too ill to either come or write. Finally he placed a personal in the *Herald*, under initials agreed upon:

If in want, I will gladly help you. To lose faith in you would be worse than anything else that could happen. Write.

The mail brought a postcard: "I have been too sick to write or see you. Will meet you at 3 o'clock on Friday at — East — Street." (He named a street-number in Harlem.)

On that day, important and unexpected duties engaged the Rector so long that he was late in arriving at the place designated. No one was there. He never heard of or from the man again, but always maintained that he was honest and that either sickness or personal violence prevented a fulfillment of his promises.

The Rector was in his study, busily engaged in catching up with his correspondence and parochial duties.

The maid entered.

"A young man is downstairs with a letter of introduction to you."

"Tell him to come right up here."

The letter of introduction was written by an English priest who expressed his regret at not knowing the Rector personally; but, knowing him by reputation, he "ventured to recommend the bearer as deserving, of good family, ability, worthy of assistance," etc.

The young man said that he had just arrived from England; that he had come to America to seek employment as an artist; spoke modestly, but not depreciatively, of his ability; he had some money, not very much; what he wanted most was



Dr. George Hendric Houghton

**Founder of the Church
Rector for near a Half Century**

work. Did the Rector know any publishers, and would he give the artist letters of recommendation to them?

The Rector wrote to several of his friends among the publishers, asking them to give the young man a chance to show his ability. He would make no other request than that: letters of recommendation were not in his line. He rarely gave one, and then only when he knew from personal acquaintance that facts warranted the giving.

Would the Rector recommend a respectable boarding place? Yes, that he would do cheerfully.

As the interview drew toward a close, it appeared that the young artist needed "a little more money" than he had at the immediate moment. Would the Rector let him have it, "of course, merely as a loan." Yes, that also he would do.

Daily visits to the Rectory followed. The Englishman was of engaging personality. Before long, he secured from the Rector a promise of "further assistance."

Then, early one morning, there came a message from him: he was in the Tombs—he was to be tried that day—begged the Rector to come down and get him off.

Turning his back on his schedule of work for the day, Dr. Houghton hurried to the Tombs. Officials assured him that there was no question of the man's guilt. When he saw the prisoner, he found

him absolutely indifferent to the fact that he had committed a crime, interested in only one thing—how to escape punishment.

The impenitent needs the birch.

Dr. Houghton told him that he must abide the legal consequence of his crime. *But*, he staid by him during his trial.—Guilty: Six months on Blackwell's Island.—As he shook the prisoner's hand and bade him "good-bye," the Rector told him that as soon as he was released, to come to the Rectory and he would try to help him in any way that he could.

And now for the grain of gold in the muck:

Sentenced to jail, the fellow's only anxiety was that his father and mother, back in England, should not hear of it. It was arranged that his letters to his family and friends should be sent to the Rectory and remailed from there, their letters to him were to be addressed to the Rectory and thence forwarded to Blackwell's Island.

In time there came a letter from the mother, addressed to Dr. Houghton. She wrote thanking the Rector for all his kindness to her son, from whom they had just received a nice long letter. He told them he was under an engagement for six months to go to the Rocky Mountains, and make sketches for *Harper's Weekly*, and during that time letters would be forwarded by Dr. Houghton who would know his exact whereabouts. "My son writes," she added, "that he owes his present engagement

entirely to you. You don't know how grateful I am that you so kindly secured it for him."

The six-months' "engagement" came to an end.

The young Englishman was never seen at the Rectory again.

No, she wouldn't send her name up: it would mean nothing to Dr. Houghton—she was a stranger—her home was in a city in the far West. But she was anxious to see him upon a matter of great importance to herself. Could she?

The Rector came down from his study.

And this is what she told him:

An only son, grown to manhood, upon whom was centered all her love, had become dissipated. He had tried to reform but had failed. As a last hope, he was about to embark for a long sea-voyage on a sailing ship, the captain of which was an old friend of the family. Mother and son had come on from the West; the ship was to sail in forty-eight hours; she was staying to see him off. Would Dr. Houghton please have a little talk with her boy: she felt sure that it would strengthen his good resolutions.

Within the hour, the Rector's study door closed behind the young man. There was a long, long talk. And when the Rector accompanied him downstairs, there was a something—perhaps in his eyes, perhaps in the set of his shoulders—that told the mother, who was waiting, that the transformation had been worked in her boy. Her thanks

were too heart-felt to be translated into words. A warm pressure of the hand, and the strangers were gone.

The story unfolds from the mother angle:

The next afternoon, the son went out for a stroll. As the hours of absence lengthened into the twilight, the mother began to steal uneasy glances at the clock; the dinner-hour came and went—there could no longer be any question what was keeping him!

She could bear those hours of waiting, of listening, no longer. In a frenzy of despair, she started out to seek him, in the streets, in the saloons.

The barrooms closed.

But she kept up her weary search, wandering through the deserted streets and avenues of a strange city.

Dawn—sunrise—the clatter of milk wagons—streets taking on life—a big city waking up.

The saloons opened. Yes, that was where she would find him.

But, as it was so very early, a little after six, the thought came to me that there was at least time to say a prayer at that hour in the quiet little Church. So I turned my steps thither. I saw one kneeling there before me, and, as I passed him softly, recognized my own son.

(From a letter written by the mother, to Dr. Houghton.)

The young man had yielded to the old lure; had spent the afternoon and evening in dissipation; had fallen into a drunken sleep in some handy bed. Waking in the early morning, realizing the sufferings of his mother, he was seized with remorse. He decided to go first to The Little Church, and there ask upon his knees pardon for the wrong-doing, strength for the future.

Mother and son knelt side-by-side in prayer.

Had not my steps been so directed, and his also, I know not when or where we should have met again; for in the place where I was intending to seek him, he would not have been found.

As they left the Church, they met the Rector, coming for the celebration of the early morning service.

It was a great comfort that he made, before you, that tearful acknowledgment of wrong, and had your blessing. They seemed to me Sacramental.

And that day the Rector went with the young man to his ship, saw him on board, remained until the long voyage began.

Months later, a letter came. It was written on the sailing ship, then off the coast of the Argentine, South America. "I have prayed and prayed for

guidance and help, and it is my earnest wish, if God spares my life, to live as a Christian and a gentleman."

That letter received a four-page answer. How anxious Dr. Houghton was that he should say just the right thing, is revealed by the fact that he drafted the letter first. That draft has come to me in the chance accumulation contained in the old, black-leather valise. It is just such a letter as a father might write.

Years later, there came to The Little Church, for summer duty, a priest from that same western city. He knew these people well. The young man had become a prosperous business man; the mother, now an old lady, was enjoying with him a comfortable and a happy home.

The incidents thus far narrated in this chapter, have been written from the notes for a history of The Little Church, prepared by the Rector's nephew and successor, the late Dr. Houghton.

In his Forty-fifth Anniversary Sermon, the Rector, the first Dr. Houghton, said:

There has been much, much, that is unusual, much, much, that is out of the ordinary parochial experience . . .

It is not two weeks since a prominent publisher of this town asked the Rector when his reminiscences would be written and printed.

No such book will ever be written. No such reminiscence will ever be printed. No diary, no journal, has ever been kept, no record has ever been made, no documents, no letters, no notes have ever been preserved

But though no letters involving priestly confidence were "preserved," in the great volume of correspondence the destruction of some was overlooked. Among the hundreds of letters of other nature, the sermons, documents, memoranda, in the old, black-leather valise, I have unearthed a handful of that which was proscribed.

Those whom these letters concerned, are long since dust. I have changed names, addresses. The publication of them in this book cannot result in "the least possible pain or regret of a living soul"—the thing the Rector wished to avoid.

And so I have used them: they give some small glimpse of the untiring activities of the samaritan whose address was 1 East Twenty-ninth Street; nor is their value as "human documents" to be overlooked.

RICHMOND, VA.
July 15, 1886

DEAR DOCTOR HOUGHTON

Your letter received this morning gave us a great shock and is the first intimation we have

had that there is any question at this time about the past. We had thought it as you say "buried in silence."

I am wholly unaware of the circulation of any story in reference to either my sister or myself. We do not clearly understand if it was . . . who asked you to contradict it.

.

Through God's great mercy the events of the past have not in all these years been suspected. My sisters knew everything truthfully but through a train of providential circumstances my brothers were absolutely in ignorance of the whole matter. Shortly after the time you knew of, they were all three married. Two of them are living here, with their little families around them, and are very happy. One brother has since died leaving a wife and child who also live here. Surely now is not the time to bring up the past to them since they never knew!

My sister and I lead quiet, busy lives. . . . We have a loved home and many warm friends.

. . . .

Will you relieve our great anxiety by stating what has been said to you and by whom?

I most earnestly regret that you should be troubled about this matter. I have never half expressed how grateful I am to you for past

kindness, and it makes me the more sorry to again trespass upon your time and attention.

Yours with all respect
MARY BROWN

DEAR DOCTOR HOUGHTON

The book mark is the prettiest which I have ever seen and is very highly prized by me. How can you think of wanting to send me presents? To your anxious watchfulness we owe the life of our precious child; you have made her life the greatest blessing of ours; if we had unlimited wealth we could never repay you for all that you were to us in a dreary past, for all that you are in the bright present. Daily thanks are offered to our Father in Heaven for His mercy in allowing our child to return to the Shepherd and the Fold. Do you not perceive that we must always be your indebted as well as ever grateful friends?

Truly and affectionately
SARAH ROE

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND
Nov. 24, 1890

MY DEAR DR. HOUGHTON

I was indeed thankful to receive the enclosed letter yesterday and to know that Henry is

alive and well, so hasten to send it on to you to let you know the state he is in and to beg you to help me further. He must have clothes before he can do anything. I beg you will help me in this matter. Do you know any one in St. Louis you could ask to get them for him? I feel confident you will find some means of doing this for me, so I am enclosing you a Post Office order for £10 which I shall be so grateful if you will have laid out to the best advantage for him. We do not think it would be best, under the circumstances, to send him money as he might be tempted to make other use of it. You will see that Charlie North suggests I should send him the money to get clothes for Henry, but I do not know him personally and have heard such contradictory accounts of him that I do not know if we can trust him to do as he says.

I wrote to Henry yesterday telling I was going to send you money to get him some clothes but that he must write *to you* on receipt of my letter so we may be sure of help reaching him.

Did you receive a letter I wrote to you last month begging you to make inquiries about him?
. . . I do wish he were nearer to New York so that you might see him personally and advise him.

I feel so unhappy when I think of all my poor brother has been through but sincerely trust he will make a fresh start now and get on.

Hoping you will forgive me for giving you so much trouble.

Yours ever gratefully

JANE WHITE

(The following letter was enclosed with the above.)

GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA
Nov. 8, 1890

MY DEAR JANE

Your letter of last summer was received by me after some delay as Nellie did not have my address. I should have answered before this. As I had not heard anything from him for nearly two years though I had made inquiries and tryed every way to locate him. And had about given it up when to my great delight and surprise I received a letter from him dated St. Louis. I answered the same at once. And about two weeks ago I went to St. Louis and seen him. And I must say Jane that the poor boy has had a hard time of it. As he told me that he did not intend to let any one hear from him until he could give a good account of himself but the coming cold winter and the experience he had last season has *compelled* him to ask for assistance. I do not want to hurt your feelings but the poor boy is no better off than a tramp he is

in the cheapest kind of a lodging house. And is often without enough to eat.

And last winter his bed was a box car.

He is alone then in St. Louis without work and winter coming on.

I am now trying to find work for him and think in time I will be successful but if I do he has no clothes that he could put in an appearance with. All he has to cover his back with is an old threadbare suit no underclothes or linen. I expect to go to live in St. Louis in about six weeks we are now boarding. as I am travelling on the road and as soon as I get settled he is welcome to come with me. but in the meantime, something ought to be done for him, and that at once. for he is so discouraged that he is liable to do something desperate.

If you feel that you are able to assist him in any way, you had better let me know. and I will see that he is properly Clothed for the winter As I think I could put the money to very good advantage for him

His Adress is . . . Stret, St. Louis Mo but as one cannot tell how long he will be there you had better send his mail to me. As now I will keep track of him Now Jane I do not want you to Worrie about Henry. but do what you can for him he is doing the best he can under circumstances. And is willing to work. but in his present condition he can do nothing

You write me on receipt of this to the address below

Trusting that this will find you well. with love. Believe Me.

Sincerely Yours
CHARLIE NORTH

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND
Feby. 15, 1891

MY DEAR DR. HOUGHTON

Thank you so much for your kind letter. It was so good of you to write me yourself for the sight of your handwriting was the best assurance I could have that you were feeling somewhat better.

Thanks also for enclosing Mr. Starkweather's letter, which is such a comfort to me—I am so glad to know that after all Henry has used the money I sent for clothes, and sincerely trust he will now be able to get steady work and pray that he will now really try to get on—

Thank you dear friend for all the trouble you have taken on his account, and for putting him under the notice of a friend of your own whose influence will I hope urge him to do better.

I find I am in your debt for \$2 which I hope soon to forward to you but sometimes it is so difficult to get American greenbacks out here.

Again thanking you for all your goodness to me and hoping you will soon be restored to perfect health,

Yours ever very gratefully

JANE WHITE

WARMINGHAM RECTORY,
SANDHURST ENGLAND,
Sept. 20, 1888.

REV. AND DEAR MR. HOUGHTON,

Your very kind letter would have been answered sooner but Mrs. Green has been moving about during the summer holiday, and I have had some difficulty in finding her address. I enclose the letter she has written to me, which, you will see, only proves that Green is, as he has been before proved to be, a wicked liar! I also enclose a copy of the letter which Mrs. Green it seems, did write to him last Christmas. I was not aware that she had done so until I received her letter this week. He left very many debts unpaid when he sailed from England for Jamaica the week after he was married, so that I am not surprised to hear that he has been a swindler in America. It really is too bad that such a man should be able to do so much mischief and yet be unpunished. I do hope that the German girl will not be taken in by him, as poor Miss Bell was in Jamaica. I am glad to hear that the

latter lady does now understand what Green's true character is, for at first it was, I heard, difficult to persuade her of the true state of the case. Green's children by his first wife are now entirely supported by the present Mrs. Green, who is devoted to them.

I can not sufficiently thank you for taking so much trouble in this sad affair. I shall always be interested to hear anything that you may wish to communicate to me and will gladly answer any questions.

May God continue to bless your work. With kind regards,

I am yours very sincerely

HENRY IRELAND BLACKBURNE

(I see no reason for not using
the name and address of Canon
Blackburne.)

(The two following letters were enclosed with
the above.)

HUDDERSFIELD,
Sept. 17, 1888.

DEAR CANON BLACKBURNE

I received your letter and enclosure this morning and am most pained and shocked by the wicked conduct of my husband as are also his relatives with whom I am now staying.

With regard to the statements made by my

husband, they are quite false, except the fact that I wrote to him last Christmas but not as he says to ask his forgiveness. The first thing he says is "That he was forced into the second marriage." With regard to that, I may say, (though you know the circumstances almost as well as myself) I was engaged to Mr. Green in December of '83—he told me that he was going to Jamaica, and a few weeks before the time fixed for his departure, asked if I would go out there to be married if he was unable to come for me. I promised to do so, but upon it coming to the knowledge of my parents, they refused to allow my going out and said that unless I went as his wife, it should not be. He told me of it and begged me to consent to the marriage. I did so and he procured a license and we were married in Weston Church on February 3, 1884. He left on the 10th of that month. His children were not in my charge at all till after our marriage and were not alluded to by either of my parents. With regard to the marriage being annulled, it is not, or if so I know nothing of it and it is not with my consent. I do not understand how it could be so.

As to my writing to him last Christmas, I did, simply because I thought at that season his heart might be softened and he be influenced for good. I prayed that it might be so. I have enclosed a copy of the letter for you to see, as I

sent one to his cousin at the time and she has fortunately preserved it and kindly allowed me to copy it. I may have acted foolishly, but I did not think any one could be bad enough to twist and turn what I wrote as he has done; I can only pray that God will forgive him, and give me strength to bear this burden.

I am grateful to you for so kindly sending the letter to me. The children were well when I left last Thursday and hope are so still. With kind regards

Yours ever gratefully

E. A. GREEN

(Copy)

THE SCHOOL HOUSE,
SALISBURY, ENGLAND

DEAR JOE

As the Holy Season of Xmas is again approaching I feel that we ought not to allow our hearts to harbor resentment any longer but obey the command of our Blessed Lord and forgive as we would be forgiven.

As the Angels sang "Peace on earth" so let the peace Christmas brings enter into our hearts and that Holy, happy season be one of great joy. The children, I am happy to say are well at present but darling Nora is very delicate and often ailing. I hope all is well with you. I shall

be glad to have a line in reply and till I hear
from you

Remain

Yours &c.

E. A. GREEN

NEW YORK, Sept. 10, 1865.

MY DEAR DR. HOUGHTON

It is very pleasant to hear of your welfare from time to time, indirectly, though it is long since we have had any direct intelligence from you. The time is drawing near now when we may hope to see you face to face, provided you still hold to your purpose of coming home in the *Persia*. . . . As your house may not be ready for you, will you not, with Mrs. Houghton, give us the pleasure of a visit from you immediately on your return? We shall be delighted if you will come directly to our house, and stay as long as you will. I shall try to meet you on the arrival of the steamer, and hope you will consent to this proposal.

. . . At the meeting of the Vestry about ten days ago, we elected Mr. Betts, Mr. Bradford and Mr. Docharty delegates to the Convention. I presume you will not be home in time to attend it. So far as I learn all is going well at the Church. . . .

Hoping to welcome you both home safe and

well, I am, dear Doctor Houghton, with great regard, ever truly and affectionately

Yours

BERTRAM BLACK

(The address on the following letter, year not given, shows that the Blacks had moved downtown, into the Washington Square district.)

Oct. 27.

MY DEAR DR. HOUGHTON,

Your kind note bidding us farewell was duly rec'd and Mrs. Black joins with me in thanking you for the friendship towards us that you express therein.

With your permission, however, you will have to count us again among your parishioners, for when it came to leaving, Mrs. Black could not reconcile herself to severing a connection which has been so long and so pleasant and did not feel that she would be "at home" in any other Church in New York. So we have retaken our pew and do not intend to try again to leave you.

. . . Hoping soon to have the pleasure of seeing you, and with kind regards from Mrs. Black and myself

Believe me

Very truly yours

BERTRAM BLACK

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,
October 4, 1877.

DEAREST DEAR DR. HOUGHTON,

You will know why I send you this note before you read a line. My heart is nearly broken, and I fear yours must be quite—God help us! What poor creatures we are! It seems as if the time were fast coming when we could no longer trust our nearest and dearest friend, least of all trust ourselves. Through all this dreadful news of Black's wrong-doing, my thoughts have been of you, more, I may say, than of the chief actors and material sufferers. God be merciful, sustain and comfort you, and help you to feel assured of what every one who has known you, as your loving Bishop has known you, that this dreadful defection and fall, is in no way owing to any failure of duty on the part of the Rector.

May God visit Black with His Grace and Mercy,—and, if he be now in the land of the living, may he be brought to deep effectual repentance, and then to all the consolations and hopes purchased by the sacrifice of our dear adorable Lord and Saviour. Again I say, dear friend, God comfort you—God comfort us all—

Ever your loving Bishop and friend

H. P.

(Extract of letter from a friend.)

14 Oct. '77

. . . My heart has been with you all day today. Last evening brought us your letter and the papers containing the accounts of the full proceedings in court on Friday. The terrible story progresses rapidly and today I have been thinking as you have of him, this first day and first Sunday in prison, alone.

We think and talk of everything—of Black—Mrs. Black—the children—the sisters—the brothers—you—the church. . . . All seems so hopeless to us. God only can help any of the sufferers. I pity and pray for him with sincere sympathy. I can in one sense understand his explanation, and appreciate his mental course but as in so many other cases I can not reconcile it with sound reasoning faculties. I can't understand how he could have looked forward a day. There was not, to any man of reasonable business capacity, a glimmer of hope. He must have been utterly crazed from the beginning and incapable of judgment. In any other case he would a year or more ago have come to you, or to some one, and told all and asked advice as to what he should do to save himself and those dependent on him.

(Extract of letter from another friend.)

. . . My brother James has received the enclosed offer and sent it to me to show to Mrs. Black's brother. It has reached me here in Boston and it struck me that you in New York would know more of the plans and feelings of the friends who are caring for the children—and perhaps something of this gentleman whose offer seems to be made with delicacy and sincere kindness.

I need not say how much our hearts have been with the unhappy sufferers in this dreadful affair, and with you in your holy work of suffering with and sustaining them . . .

I received yesterday a letter giving an account of a visit paid to Mrs. Black by our old friend, Dr. . . . His account of her state is altogether favorable, the view that he takes is hopeful though he considers her case still as critical, requiring time and care. For my part I cannot but regard this cloud that has swept over her mind as a merciful one. In it she remembers no more the anguish, and lives as one in a dream—it is as Milton said of his blindness “a darkness from the overshadowing of the Almighty wings.”

My husband desires his regards to you and says that you have filled the ideal of a Christian pastor in your care of this stricken family.

(The next letter is written in a childish hand.)

December 21, 1877

DEAR DOCTOR HOUGHTON

The little letters came safely yesterday, and I am very much obliged to you for mine. I have been down to help "bunch" twice this week. Only a few of the Sunday School children come.

We have had no snow worth speaking of yet, so we have been able to go in the woods a good deal. We find beautiful mosses and berries and evergreens to trim the house with.

We had a nice letter from Papa yesterday, and today we had one from Mamma. She says she is coming here the day before Christmas. We are all so glad.

Arthur had a beautiful birthday last Saturday. He had two cakes. It happened this way. He was invited out to tea and had a cake there. When he came home he had another for we did not think he would have one when he was away.

I am going to learn the collects for the different Sundays in the year and when I wrote to Papa about it, he said he would learn them to. I think it will be real nice to know that we are learning them together.

Your loving
ELSIE BLACK

Dover Town.

Dear Dr Houghton



(The message to Dr. Houghton, in the circle surrounded by the names of the five children of the man in Sing Sing, reads: "List to the song of the friendly Robin who would fain sing you a warm welcome among your friends in Dover Town.")

SING SING,
July 9, 1879.

MY DEAR DR. HOUGHTON

I am inexpressibly grateful for your letter. How very distressing was the murder of Mr.

Seymour! I had already heard of it, and knew that you must be passing through another of those strange experiences which so often come to your lot, and that your sympathy and strength must again be taxed to the utmost.

I cannot recall the words of my last letter in reference to the feeling against me, which I had been told existed in certain quarters, but infer from your letter that I said something about "throwing me overboard." Let me explain that what I meant was simply this,—that while I could never doubt,—even if it should be the will of God that our paths in life should diverge so far that no word could pass between us,—while I could never doubt even then, that you still gave me your affection, your blessing and your prayers, I should not think it right to remain in a position where my presence could be an embarrassment or impediment to your usefulness, though I know that you are not one to be disturbed or disquieted because thoughtless people may say of you "this man is a friend of publicans and sinners."—I do not know how you or any right minded man could have helped being moved with indignation against me.—Horror and righteous anger must have come most naturally to the minds of all good people—especially to those whose lives had been spotless, who had never been tempted or had never been overcome by deadly sins,—in the shock and sur-

prise my downfall gave them. It is natural I think for any one to be more indignant at crimes which are quite foreign to their nature, than at the sins which easily beset them.—But if you *did* feel moved and indignant in your heart you never showed it to me, and while I knew very well that my sin must seem to you enormous and abominable, as indeed it was, I never found in you anything but compassion and loving kindness, for which I have daily thanked God because it has given me some increase of faith that if He imparts His Spirit so largely to one of His servants, He will also extend His forgiving mercy to me.—

In meditating upon the past I cannot tell whom I have most deeply wronged:—sometimes it is one, and sometimes another who seems to rise up as an accusing spirit.

This I know, that I grievously wronged you, and the Church.—If I have been slow to *ask* forgiveness it has been, not because I did not feel the need of it,—but because I knew that in the largeness of your heart it was granted before it was asked, and because I knew that any *words* of penitence might well be received with distrust, and that time alone would test my sincerity.

It was through no fault of yours that anything which I did or tried to do for the Church had a “taint” upon it.— It was many years ago that I received a letter from you, which I kept and

often read, in which, in the kindest way, you raise a question whether I was not giving more than I ought to give.—From that time on I think I gave more anonymously than I did openly. Nobody knows better than I do that a sacrifice must be spotless:—that the end does not justify the means:—that God's favor is not to be gained by the fruits of dishonesty and sin:—and it is true that I never imagined that it could be so gained.

On the other hand it is also true, (at least I believe I am not deceived in saying) that what little I did do,—(it was not much, though more than was justifiable)—was *not* done with the purpose of gaining your favor or the favor of any man,—but from a necessity which seemed to be laid upon me to help to the uttermost of my power objects which seemed to demand all the support I could give.—One thing is certain you never suggested in the slightest degree that I should give so much as a penny to anything in which you were interested.—Let me say here,—that the *font* and the *Cross*, the only two objects that I know of, which could by any possibility be identified with me, were the fruits of honest labor long before I had diverged from the road of honor and integrity.

I found when Mrs. Black was last here, that she had been under the impression that these forgeries had been going on since the year 1863—

She gathered it from some newspaper, and was relieved to find that they had not dated back more than two years— Perhaps you and others were under the same misapprehension—

Now I do not wish to be guilty of extenuating my wrong doing: on the contrary the wickedness of it seems greater all the time,—and would have overwhelmed me but for the greatness of God's mercy which has been manifested to me through the forbearance of my fellow men whom I have injured, and the forgiveness which I hope He has put into their hearts.—

But I hope it is not wrong to believe, that along with all my mistakes, my errors, my sins, that there was ever in my heart just a little spark of love to God and love to man, which did not make wrong right, but which was indeed a strong living principle.

I don't know anything about it, and don't understand and can't explain. But it seems to me that I went wrong in the very way and the very places where I most wanted to be and do right.—

It would doubtless be a relief to think that I was not of sound mind—and I should come to that conclusion about anyone else,—but in this case no such apology is admissible.

My perceptions of right and duty were as clear as they are now,—and I stand utterly without excuse or justification, self-condemned.

God have mercy upon me.—

But I did not mean to say all this—it was not necessary.—I only wanted you to be assured that I am deeply sorry for the pain I have given you,—and that I value your friendship so highly that the very thought of separation is so painful that I could not have suggested such a thing but from a sense of what might under certain circumstances be a duty to you.—I have sometimes thought I would propose to my brothers and sisters to change my name and go far away from them,—but sober reason tells me that such a proposition would be little less than an insult to their affection,—and in like manner with regard to yourself I shall not deprive myself of your sympathy, your help and your affection as long as you are willing to give them to me, for to do so would be an ungrateful return for your proffered kindness.

I heard from the newspaper reports current here, that you had been to Albany: and my sister also wrote, very guardedly, to the same effect yesterday.—

She named no names, nor did she say a word of what Mr. L. had done, except to assure me again that he had done and would do all he could.—She did not even say that he had accompanied you, but said you were fully in accord.—

I am more than satisfied with what has been

done, and, whatever may be the result, am more glad the longer I think of it, that the effort has been made.—It is a great thing for me, and for the children, that so many good men have signified their concurrence.—It is for the Governor to decide what the interests of the State require.—I shall be satisfied, whether the result is adverse to our hopes or not, and with very little expectation of a successful issue shall not be disheartened if he says no.—

My injured fellow men have been more merciful and forgiving to me than I am to myself—and Divine Justice is more merciful and wise than the administrators of human law.—

My prayer is that while I stay here I may have the grace of patient endurance and contentment:—and that whenever I go out I may have courage and fortitude; and that wherever I am I may have true repentance, humility and sincerity.

I never had a word or message from either H. W. B. or T. K. B. nor knew anything about their feelings toward me, until Mrs. Black's last visit here when she said they had very kindly offered to do all they could to influence the Governor.—

I did glance at the published report of his, H. W. B.'s sermon, the day I left New York, but did not read it.—This is all I know of either of them.

You are almost as familiar with everything which happened subsequent to the 1st of October, 1877, as I am, and you know that I was not willing to move until I had sent for you and that I took counsel with you alone at every step.—I was more anxious than you, rather than anyone else, should approve what I did,—and though it seemed to me that the responsibility of decision could not be transferred from me to any one else, I have hoped that whether you fully coincided with me in judgment or not you have at least believed that I was earnestly desirous to do right.

Hoping that the feelings which these broken sentences very poorly express will be discovered by you from your knowledge of my heart, and with fullest confidence in your faithfulness and your sympathy and affection, I am

—very unworthily—and very
affectionately but not insincerely—

Yours

BERTRAM BLACK

(Apparently the appeal to the Governor for a pardon, was not successful; and Bertram Black served his term.)

Nov. 1, 1887.

MY DEAR DR. HOUGHTON

Every word that you said on Sunday was well said and true. I know that you did not like to

say it,—but I trust it is having a good effect. All the money I had in the world was \$5.73. I felt none the poorer when I came out of Church with the 73 cents. Today is pay day, and, as I do not expect to be in town next Sunday, I make haste to enclose \$20. which you may call pew rent—or what you please. I call it love money. I dare make no promises farther than that I will give what I can. The pleasure of giving is so great that it is impossible to regard it as in any sense self-denial.

With much love—as ever

BERTRAM BLACK.

Of “the murder of Mr. Seymour,” which Bertram Black, in his letter to Dr. Houghton, describes as “another of those strange experiences which so often come to your lot,” I have been unable to learn anything. Like so many other of his “strange experiences,” it must remain unwritten history.

“HOME IS THE SAILOR, HOME FROM THE SEA”

A USEFUL, kindly, cheerful old age!—what a service to one's fellows, this practical, actual demonstration of the liveableness of life! How much more wholesome for a humanity that—like it or not—must live and labor, a robust, masculine spirit, than the whining, shirking spirit that infects the world today! “The life speaks so much louder and more impressively than the lips.” And the life of this old parson-man said: “I have run a long race: my withers are still unwrung.”

The '50s, the '60s, the '70s, the '80s passed, the '90s were in the passing, the Twentieth Century was at hand, and Dr. Houghton was still at his task, his heart still in his task: seventy-one years old, forty-three years of toil in the Transfiguration vineyard behind him, the anniversary of 1891 found him asking that he “might be permitted to see seven more of these anniversaries, and so reach the fiftieth anniversary of the church.”

The more credit to him!—if any one in Life's Regiment is to be pardoned the sniffling word, it should be he whom duty has called to witness so

much of suffering and sorrow and sin, to hear so much of weeping, to see so much of the cross-purposes of hope and fate!

He was a man who valued old associations, old friendships, a man who knew the poignancy of “auld lang syne.”

In 1885:

There may be two, not more, beside myself, here today who took part in that service seven and thirty years ago.

Three years later:

There is not so much as one of those who joined with the Rector in that service, here present today.

And, less than two months before his own death:

Forty-nine years! It is a long period to look back upon. The years are more in number than those of an ordinary life. The Baptisms, the Confirmations, the Admissions to the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord that have taken place; the Ministrations to the sick and the dying that have hence freely gone forth; the Burials of the dead—all these are too many to be recalled. And I would not recall them if I could. For while the Church has

stood, and while the works remain and are treasured up with God, where are those who were with me in the beginning and for many, many years after, and, humanly speaking, wrought with me in the doing of the things that have here been done? They are gone, gone, gone, sleeping in their graves the world over; and I am left, alone, in the midst of a new generation—thanks be to God!—of loved and loving ones.

But Memory is a wilful servant: it has a way of bringing unbidden guests from out the dead past.

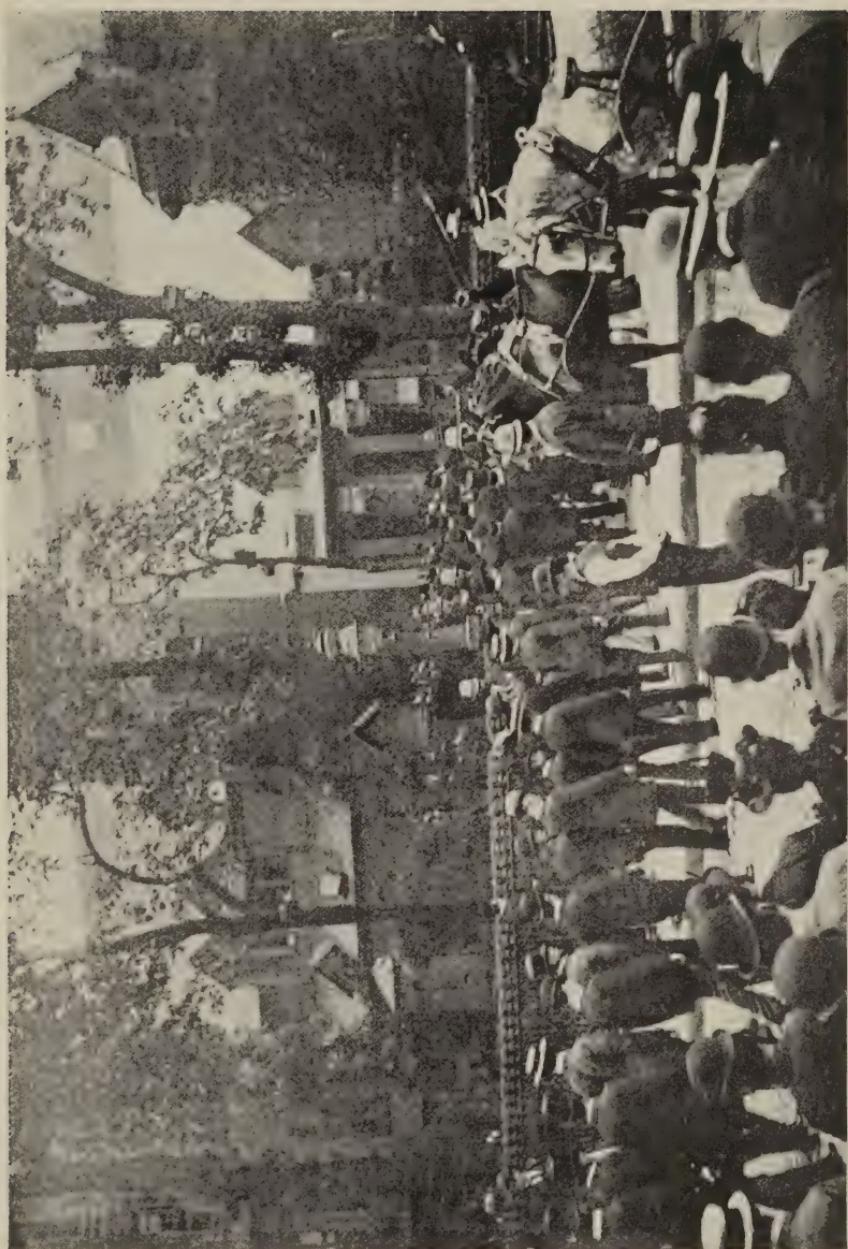
I am not one of the best of sleepers, and often, almost as a rule, lie wakeful for two and sometimes three of the hours that follow the midnight. And once and again, as I do so, there come before me the faces of one and another of those who have been here, during the many years that God has preserved me alive in this my only Charge, and are gone—the faces of those by whose dying beds I have stood and over whom I have seen the grave close; of those who once here have sought elsewhere their spiritual home; those to whom I am permitted still to minister; those who are sick; those who are in trouble; those who are at sea; those who have fallen into sin. And the heart goes up with a "The Lord bless thee and keep thee."

Unlike the average parson or priest, it was not only the dying among his own parishioners, whose last days or hours or minutes he was summoned to comfort, but also the mortal passing of strangers, the number of these latter rapidly increasing with the spreading reputation for spiritual hospitality of The Little Church Around the Corner. A task? —this oft-repeated presence in the chamber of death, this ministering of the Last Rites with its unescapable witnessing of death-agonies, hearing of death rattles? No—a privilege! An old man, himself looking death in the face, who confessed to sharing “the natural shrinking from death,” who called death “The King of Terrors”; but was he not a Shepherd of the Lord? Let his physical shrinking be what it might, was there not on every death-bed an Immortal Soul that should be saved to the Fold? A task? No—a privilege!

What a privileged parish has this of the Transfiguration been in ministering the last things at the last to those who sought them only at the last! What a record of last Words, last Prayers, last Sacraments, last Absolvings, and last Blessings—last Departs—“Depart, O Christian soul, in the Name of God the Father Almighty who created thee; in the Name of Jesus Christ His Son, who suffered for thee; in the Name of the Holy Ghost who hath poured His grace into thee—one holy and eternal God—to whom be glory

The Funeral of Edwin Booth, June 9, 1893

The Players' Club Entering The Little Church Around the Corner



forever and ever. Amen. And may thy place be this day in peace, and thy habitation in Paradise."

Let the rasping be on the body or on the soul, frequent repetition is apt to produce callousness. Yet the frequent contact with death never dulled Dr. Houghton's realization of the sorrow it wrought: unto the end, he could "go with you with the fullness of sympathy, to the graves where you leave your hearts with your loved ones."

I have an old clipping (from *The New York Times* I think). It quotes an old lady:

I have always been a Methodist, but to me no minister can take the place of Dr. Houghton. We had to remain in the city one summer and my first baby died. Our church was closed and our minister had gone to Europe. We couldn't find a minister to conduct the funeral. I was heart-broken. Somebody suggested sending for Dr. Houghton of the Little Church Around the Corner. I didn't believe he would come to a "dissenter's" home, but he came at once, and it seemed to me that no one could have comforted me so much. He knew just what to say and do. He made me feel that I was the mother of an angel. The darkness all vanished, and I could keep up and comfort my family instead of breaking

down. I have always been a working member in my own church, but no minister ever seemed to me like Dr. Houghton.

In his latter years, with their long stretches of ill-health, there was some laxity in the old rule to destroy all letters received by him. Among the letters of this period that have come into my hands, there are many, many black-bordered ones that carried touchingly heartfelt messages of thanks.

Even better than these letters is this indirect evidence, extracts from two addresses:

“Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?”

It is meet and right that, in our bereavement and whatsoever deprivations and trials, we should be mindful of what God in His goodness has left to us; of what are the compensations—for there are such in all things—that come with our trials; and of the good that is to spring from the evil. But grief must have its way for a while. And Elkanah comfort—he seemed to have a comfortable opinion of himself, “better than ten sons!”—the which Hannah in her honesty did not admit—Elkanah comfort is not the kind of comfort for the first: as the comfort

of Job's comforters is no comfort from first to last. One thing is not another. A wife is a wife, and a husband is a husband. But a wife is not a child, and a husband is not a child. And when baby lies dead on mother's lap, though never so lovely and loved and loving a Johnny and a Sally are pulling at the apron-strings there is no use in reminding the mother that she still has Johnny and Sally. She knows it and loves them none the less. But Johnny is Johnny and Sally is Sally. But neither of them is baby.

Many a heart is well nigh broken afresh—and a broken heart is worse than a broken head—by the precious balms, as they mean them to be and think them to be, of many a well meaning but unwise comforter.

I remember a story that my mother told me. She said that when her mother died, the deacons of the town (it was a New England town) came to pay a visit of condolence to her father, their fellow-deacon. Presently arrived for the same purpose the village Parson. He was quite young and no great favorite with the grey-haired visitors. He took the old man tenderly by the hand, and then without the endeavor with many common-places to improve the occasion, or the calling upon Brother Brown to lead in prayer, he sat down in a silence that was somewhat protracted. After a while up and spoke one of the Deacons, and thus interrupted the solemn

silent session: "Parson! don't you think it was rather queer that when Job's friends came to comfort him they sat down three days without saying a word?"

Said the Parson, though young, yet equal to the occasion: "It may seem strange that they should have done so, but I think that it would have been better for Job had they sat three days longer in silence, than when they spoke to have spoken as they did."

From the ever-full yet ever-welling heart of the sincere though silent sympathizer, through the eyes, the hand, from the presence, goes forth to the broken in heart a calming, grief-assuaging influence more salutary than that which at first can come from any Elkanah comfort.

I remember once standing in a private cemetery just at evening, while a grave was filling. The skies were leaden. The rain was falling. And all was so dreary, so gloomy. Just then a robin from a tree right over the grave burst out into a singing that seemed to have in it all the soul of all the singing of all our dear chorister boys and men when singing at their best *Te Deum Laudamus* or *Magnificat* or "*The King of Love my Shepherd is.*" That robin was Mozart and Mendelssohn and Handel and Haydn, and all the rest of them, all in one. Nay, he sang as if he were an Angel that had descended from

the Heavenly song-world to cheer us with his singing. Away went the gloom. Away went the dreariness. No longer seemed to be heard the fall of the earth upon the coffin.

Seventy years old when he spoke those words! No way-worn spirit, no shriveling of the sympathies, no callousness of the heart! Age turns some wines into vinegar; others, it mellows.

What a chorus of woe, the postman, with his blithe whistle, left behind him in the Twenty-ninth Street Rectory!

Begging letters:

"Please do not drop this until you read my plea"—a dismal tale of a bankrupt parish in the heart of the Alleghaney Mountains.

"Although it is now so long since I have heard directly from you, yet I have not forgotten your many kindnesses and good words sent to me, therefore, I venture to ask your assistance today in a matter of special and urgent necessity"—a request from a woman, "without permanent work all this winter," for a personal loan to save old family silver from sale by money-lenders with whom it was pledged.

Forlorn letters:

"May I not ask for your special prayer for one who is widowed and childless and terribly sad at heart in this season of joyfulness to so many"—

the moan of one whom Thanksgiving Day had made more acutely aware of her loneliness.

"Doubtless you are daily in receipt of these doleful letters from sorrowful women who in deep affliction in a last extremity turn to the Christian stranger"—husband bedridden, wife an invalid, no money, "two dear little ones to provide for."

Were all these letters answered?

Only the Recording Angel knows positively; but there are letters that give hint of the truth.

From an Englishman whose mother had died in New York, a stranger among strangers:

I cherish with much care the little book of hymns you sent me on my dear Mother's death; which she had used during her illness, and marked by her hands as indicating her favorite Hymns.

A small thing; but how many of us would have had the thoughtfulness to realize what that little book might mean to the son?

From a woman in Georgia:

I can not tell you what a delightful surprise, the reception, yesterday, of the box you so kindly sent me, was to all of us. The dresses, with a few alterations, will fit my daughters, as if made for them, and each is delighted to have an outfit for the winter, with hats too. . . . My son

has never had an overcoat and has been wanting one for a long time. I can not thank you enough. . . . I was so glad for that nice warm cloak for myself. . . . The tea was most acceptable too as I had been wanting some so much. . . .

That package of tea! the man who remembered to include that bit of cheer had the spirit, not of one doling out charity, but of a Santa Claus filling a Christmas stocking.

From one of his own sermons:

It greatly touched me once, I remember, when told of a farmer, who when dying—it was just at evening—asked: "Have the animals been fed?" In his own last distress he was mindful of the wants of the poor dumb creatures.

In the business of living, kindness was Dr. Houghton's cardinal principle; a thing he preached, a thing he practised.

Of only one thing did he ever complain of being weary—the appealing to his congregation for cash. For thirty-odd years the Transfiguration had been "a rich man's church," and yet the necessity for ministerial begging had always been present.

Dr. Houghton believed that God should be worshipped in a place as little unworthy *as possible* of the Presence: if the purse permitted no other

place of worship than a barn, then a barn was a right and proper place, but if the purse permitted something better, then to worship in a barn were irreverence.

As his congregation grew in wealthy membership, so he made its spiritual home commensurably beautiful.

Note chiefly and above all, that which is Transfiguration's crowning feature, that which is impressed first and at once upon every beholder: that the general air and effect of this Place, are unmistakably what they should be, those of a House of Prayer, of a Place for the Worship of Almighty God; that this is none other but the House of God, and the Gate through which Te Deum and Miserere, through which praise and prayer are to ascend up to Heaven.

. . . a place where all is reverence; a place where there is nothing to offend proper taste and religious sensibility, but much to foster them; much through them to lift the soul heavenward, where to this end, there are sacred pictures and memorial windows, lights and flowers, colors to mark the changing seasons, Garments of beauty and holiness for those who minister at the Altar, the white-robed choristers and the processional cross; a place outside whose door the World, and Wall Street and Washington are left.

. . . But pains above all pains should be taken that whatever is read or said or sung in the House of God, be read or said or sung in a manner as little unworthy as possible of the Place and of the Presence. It was the learned Dr. South, who, when told by a certain illiterate preacher that the Almighty needed no man's learning, or wisdom, or eloquence, replied: “Neither does the Almighty need any man's ignorance, or foolishness, or stammering.”

In 1881 there had been introduced in the Church of the Transfiguration, a surpliced choir of men and boys, in those days an innovation in the Episcopal Church in this country. It was a feature in “the revival of the significant, helpful practices and observances of the Church Catholic,” a movement in which Dr. Houghton was a pioneer spirit.

In all the world is there any such singing as the singing of those who have sung, since the Holy Ghost descended, of the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Judgment? Any strains of music to compare with those of Handel, and Haydn, and Mozart, and Beethoven, and Bach, and Sphor? Is there anything to equal the Psalms of David? The songs of Bernard of Cluny, the Dies Irae, the Stabat Mater, the mediæval hymns of Aquinas and others? The hymns, many of them with which

we are familiar, as found in hymns Ancient and Modern, and even in our Protestant Episcopal Hymnal?

A beautiful church, a beautiful service of music (and don't let us forget, a rectory with night-bell and speaking tube) a wealthy congregation in the pews, but a shortage of cash in the church treasury!

To one who stands upon the sidelines of the religious field, it is an inexplicable thing that people who lavish money upon temporal homes, should default in their installment payments on their mansions in the skies.

The old rector did not mince his words:

We can go to the country and deny ourselves no manner of thing that is good; we have our yachts and carriages, and horses and dogs; subscribe to our oratorios; go to matinees; have fine dinners and entertainments; give luncheons at Delmonico's; belong to this club and that club—pay our dues like men; smoke the best and costliest of cigars; drink the choicest of champagnes and burgundies; wear our diamonds and rings, and laces and silks; fill the air around us with our high-priced perfumes; live at hotels and in luxurious apartments: and do our only retrenching in the things that pertain to God and His Church.

At another time:

Don't let us come here Sunday after Sunday, brethren, or even occasionally, and sit up as fine and fair as you please in our silks and our broad-cloths, with our watches and our jewelry, and say what a lovely church! what charming devotional pictures! what delightful music! if it happens so to be: and when the bason is brought to us for our offerings for God, Who giveth us all things, and for His poor, have no more for that offering than a single car fare; some of us no more than a shake or a turning away of the head. Ah! brethren, we have each of us soon a longer journey than a five-cent journey to take, and an account to render at its end to Him Who said: "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not unto Me. I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat." And what if He then turn His face from *us*?

Let us make our offering, remembering that God's eye is upon us. Suppose the bason should sound aloud in the ears of all here the name of each of us who gave or refused, and the sum given by each—as it does surely in the hearing of God?

At still another time:

The Rector, as he has grown old, has grown weary of appealing. He can appeal no more.

Circulars, words from the Chancel, have ever brought comparatively little in response. Here, as probably elsewhere, the giving, in any marked measure or due proportion, is confined to the very few. A year since, in answer to all that was said about the music, and to the appeal that was put forth, there were but twenty-nine, the Treasurer says, that made any response.

It was no exorbitant demand that he made upon the seekers of Life Eternal. "The rule is simply, 'Be merciful after thy power'—according to thy ability, not beyond it, but fully up to it." "Let us give with some consistency; according to what we have; according to what we spend for our own gratification, for our enjoyments, our food"—for them to be as liberal with God as they were with their stomachs.

He asked for no asceticism, put no prohibition upon the good things of earth; nay! he counted them among the bounties of God, things put here to make glad the way.

There is nothing amiss in one having a colored man behind the chair at dinner, and a dinner of terrapin and turkey, with something from God's vineyards to moisten them, and wearing gay clothing, and having a house on the Avenue, if God have given the means therefor, provided one proportion his alms—that which he gives



EDWIN BOOTH

MEMORIAL
WINDOW



AS "RICHELIEU"



AS "IAGO"

AS "HAMLET"



The Booth Memorial Window in The Little Church Around the Corner

The man, and three of his characterizations

to the poor—and his oblations—that which he offers to God for sacred purposes—to his estate.

Many, many, there are who need the Theatre, when that Place and its surroundings are what they might be, are what they should be, and what in many instances they are, and are more and more becoming. They need that Place for refreshment, for relief, for forgetfulness, for the brightening of a sometime dullness, for instruction, for the learning of many a good lesson, for the quickening sometimes to something better in the living.

And so I say to those who count my counsel worth having: Yes, go to the Theatre, if the Place and surroundings be what they should be, if the play be proper, if the Actors be not men and women who are notorious for immorality, if the season be suitable, and the evening be not one that should be elsewhere and otherwise spent. Yes, go, if these things be so; but go with moderation.

TRINITY CHURCH RECTORY,
HOBOKEN, N. J.

DEAR UNCLE

I have fifteen of those volumes of the Lives of the English Saints. St. Bega is in Volume VI.

Shall I fetch over the fifteen volumes on Monday?

We are all well. Mary and Gertrude send love. Can't we get you over to spend some day or a portion of some day with us? Would a clam chowder tempt you?

Affectionately

Your nephew

GEORGE

There you have a thumb-nail sketch of Dr. Houghton: a man who could appreciate the lives of the saints *in fifteen* volumes, but who also could be tempted by a clam chowder; an all-round man, practical idealist, sky-pilot with his feet on the ground—the saints are fine, so also is a clam chowder—“Time is passing! Eternity is coming!” but meanwhile, men have stomachs that God gave them. “We are all,”—Bishops and Rectors and laymen—“‘poor critters.’”

A goodly number of lads came each Sunday to the early Celebration, and lest there might not be time for them to go home for breakfast and return for the mid-day Service, they were provided with a “beefsteak breakfast” in the Rectory. “Fourteen young Churchmen got around eight pounds of steak and fixings at breakfast,” he wrote in a letter. In another: “Eleven lads came in for breakfast; steak, chops, hominy, bread, butter and coffee went down before them like grass before the mower's scythe; we shall be obliged to enlarge the table.”

Despite all that he had witnessed of suffering and sorrow and sin, all that he had heard of weeping, all that he had seen of the cross-purposes of hope and fate—despite all this and his fullness of sympathy for all this, he never let life become The Dolorous Way. Like every genuinely kindly man, he was a cheerful man: a smiling eye is one of man's benefactions to his fellows.

Always make we all, each the heart of the other to sing with our kindness of thought, look, word and deed. You have heard of the widow's heart singing for joy. Well, of human things, it is the kindness of others that tunes it up, and gives to it the festal pitch.

In a previous chapter we saw Mother Houghton writing to Son George, asking him to curb his "love of fun" when Brother Edward came to visit him in New York. Three score years passed. Bald, grey-whiskered; but a joke was still a delight, a thing to be shared at the dinner table, served up with many a chuckle.

The Duke of Newcastle was once a visitor at the Rectory. Time passed; many other visitors came to the Rectory; but the card of the Duke of Newcastle always remained, face up, on top of the cards in the basket in the front hall. Dr. Houghton had reason to suspect that that card was being kept "on dress parade" by a maiden lady relative who lived

with him. One day he bought a pack of plain visiting cards; upon each card he wrote a royal name—Queen of Sheba, Rameses I, Queen Elizabeth, and so on—and distributed the cards in various prominent places. What that maiden relative said, or what she did with the cards when she came home and discovered them, history sayeth not. But thereafter, Dr. Houghton would ask every now and again (his eyes belying his solemn face): “Did Miss — ever tell you of the afternoon she had so many distinguished callers?”

I have a volume of addresses that he made in his old age. In them, he quotes from many books: Homer’s *Iliad*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Jowett’s *Thucydides*, Aristophanes’ *The Clouds*, the *Song of Solomon*, the *Book of Job*, Jeremy Taylor’s *Holy Dying*, and so on. But the book from which he quotes most is *Nights with Uncle Remus*. He calls it “a book for all”; speaks of “our wise and funny old friend Uncle Remus.”

Of an evening, when nephews and nieces and their children came a-visiting at the Rectory, he delighted to have them gather round him, while, with a candle on the table at his elbow (it was in the days of the uncompromising gas-bracket) he read aloud the doings of “Brer Fox,” “Brer Rabbit” and the rest of Uncle Remus’ delightful friends.

There may be some old parishioners who can recall George, the colored boy in livery of blue with bright metal buttons, who for a time answered the

door bell at the Rectory. He had been brought up in the Transfiguration Sunday School; the Rector was his Godfather. Unfortunate in appearance, feeble in body and head, there was no place for him in the jostling world. Dr. Houghton made him the Rectory "buttons." The livery was bought because it delighted the heart of George. He was fond of going to parties, so Dr. Houghton also bought him a dress suit. George's misdeeds were frequent. A sample: he painted his name in red on the Rectory chimney. Finally, a misdeed so flagrant that Dr. Houghton said: "George, this is beyond me. You'll have to go to Miss Anna." (The Rector's niece who, since the death of his wife, had managed the household.) Miss Anna began to recount to George his many sins. But George interrupted: "Miss Anna, say no more. What I say is, let bygones be bygones." Miss Anna repeated that to Dr. Houghton, and George kept his job. He kept it until disease made it necessary to make other provision for him. He was taken to the Colored Home; and there, until the end came, he had a frequent visitor in Dr. Houghton. He was buried from the Church, and his body lies in the Church's lot in Saint Michael's Cemetery, beside those of George and Elizabeth Wilson, the old pew-openers.

A rich man's church only if noses were counted,
the animating spirit of the church ignored!

There were societies, Sunday School classes, for the poor, for those whose skin was white and those whose skin was black. In the church there were free sittings for one hundred and fifty—more than one-tenth its seating capacity. Possibly some of the pew-holders jealously guarded their “little pens” from the intrusion of the poor, from the intrusion of the stranger; but let the stranger, the poor man, the black man, ring the Rectory bell, no “butting horns” greeted him.

When I was a lad,—and that was years, years, years ago, I need scarcely say!—and was coming from the dry-dreary sand fields where I had been trying to graze hitherto into the green meadow pasture land of the Church, my first shepherd, the then good, kindly, rector of a parish here in this town, appointed me a feeding spot not far from the pulpit from which he was wont to feed his sheep with the food that is always most convenient and nourishing, i. e., the unfolding of Holy Scripture. I shrunk on the first Sunday from going forward to a place so conspicuous, and asking the sacristan to put me elsewhere, he set me down in a large empty pew midway down one of the alleys. As the service was proceeding, the owner of that bit of God’s House came to the door, opened it wide and holding it so, looked at me and then at the space made by the out-swung door, which he evidently wished

me, in passing through, transiently to occupy. There was room enough in that pew almost to have lain ourselves down, if disposed, and slept. But I staid not on the order of my going, but went with all noiseless speed through the opening made for me and made for another door, the church door. I did not reach it, however, for a hospitable hand was laid upon my shoulder and I found elsewhere the welcome just denied me.

The face of that fellow-sheep who ordered me out from his little pen, who bade me go grazing elsewhere, was so photographed in my remembrance, that long years after (though now many years ago)—since I have been rector here—I was wont to recognize it again and again on the near by avenue, and, as I did so, to wonder whether that fellow-sheep recalled in mine the face of the sometime lamb, so to speak, for whom in those far gone days he had only the shaking of his head and the butting of his horns. I see that face now no more on the avenue or any elsewhere. So I trust that that fellow-sheep is now safe in the fold and pasture of Paradise, where to every one who enters there is only welcome most loving from the Shepherd and from all the sheep.

In the chapter, "The Kindly Folk," I mentioned a one-time shortage in church funds, part of that

shortage representing arrears in the rector's salary; and I told how, when "The Kindly Folk" learned of it, they over-subscribed the deficiency.

How many times Transfiguration let Dr. Houghton's salary fall into arrears, I do not know. Only one treasurer's statement has come into my hands: "Easter 1895 to Easter 1896." That statement shows that the arrears in the rector's salary for the previous year had been paid in full, but that the salary for the current year was almost entirely unpaid.

There is an undated letter to Dr. Houghton, from Charles N. Kent, the church treasurer. Either the 1896 arrearage was allowed to grow, or the letter refers to still another financial back-sliding on the part of the church.

I am heartsick over your proposition to give to the Church the arrears due you—now amounting to \$9,500! Surely never did one ever give so much in love and affection, prayers and good counsel to a parish as you have given and are still giving at Transfiguration. It is something that money can never repay, but money should pay for it as far as possible. If the case were stated to the parish, it seems sure the amount would be made good but I want to follow your wishes in this and all matters. It is surely from no lack of love or affection for you that these shortcomings arise.

Back in 1879, Transfiguration Parish had purchased four lots in Sixty-ninth Street, then in the outskirts of the city, and there built a chapel. This was made what Dr. Houghton had desired Transfiguration to be, a free church—no rented pews, no owners of "little pens," no possibility of "butting horns" for the stranger who had come into "God's House." But the chapel did not prosper. The vestry wanted to sell it.

In 1896, Mr. Kent wrote Dr. Houghton:

I know the Chapel is a painful subject. But I do believe that if it were disposed of, as proposed, you will be relieved of a heavy load, and Transfiguration placed in a position where the work can surely go on, without such a heavy tax—indeed without any tax upon the Rector's purse. That is what I want to see! And if the chapel should be sold, I am sure out of the proceeds the vestry will insist upon paying to you all your advances—with which, of course, you can then do as you please.

From a memorandum left for vestry-meeting, by William C. Prime, another staunch friend of the Rector's, who was to be absent from the city:

If the chapel property be sold . . . every dollar which Dr. Houghton has given to it should be repaid to him. This is absolute. He gave

it for a purpose. That purpose ends with the sale. The money is due to him, and the vestry should insist, and take no refusal, that Dr. Houghton accept this payment. . . .

Never of robust health, age brought several long stretches of illness. He knew the twilight of the long night had come. For near a score of years, he had made an annual address to St. Anna's Guild. In the last of them—that of 1896—he spoke “on the subject of praying for the faithful departed.”

The last paragraph of that last address:

In conclusion, if a word personal may be spoken, and a request personal may be made: when on some soon coming night the doorbell of the Rectory of this Church be rung, and no longer as hitherto before its last sound has ceased the window from above be lifted by the hand that has been wont to lift it, and voice no longer be heard that has been wont to be heard, asking if there be sick or dying to be visited: or when you come hither on some soon coming day for the ministrations that are needed, and are told that the one, who has hitherto been so thankful to give them, has gone to the country, to the country that lies beyond the seas and the sunset, gone not for a summer holiday, but for all days and for all seasons, gone to return hither

again no more, let it be a time not for tears but for prayer. If the tears must needs fall from any eyes, let them fall like the drops of the Summer shower, if abundant, yet soon to be followed by the lasting sunshine; *but whenever thought returns of the hither never more returning one,* let the prayer fail not to go up from the hearts of all who hold him in loving remembrance: "*Grant him, Lord, eternal rest: and let light perpetual shine upon him.*"

An old man, sick, aware the grave was soon to open for him, but still dreaming of the perfecting of the house of worship that he had loved so long and so well.

He had long wanted the Church to become the owner of the house adjoining the church to the east, so "that we might there find the ample room we need for our schools and guilds and societies, and for our choir, so that our Sanctuary may be deepened and receive the dignity which it needs and be made more convenient and fit for its high and holy use." In 1893, seventy thousand dollars was laid upon the Altar. It was the gift of an old and staunch parishioner, Sarah Jane Zabriskie. The long-coveted house and lot became Church property.

There still remains the fulfilling of the dream—another dream—of years, years, long, long gone.

Will it indeed ever be fulfilled? Shall these old eyes be permitted to behold its fulfillment? The building of the porch-gate at the main entrance to the Church grounds, with its sheltering roof, its seat, its drinking font, its figure of the Lord with out-stretched welcoming arms, and its words: "*Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

Yes, those old eyes were permitted to behold the fulfillment of that dream of years, years, long, long gone. Through the beneficence of a parishioner, Mrs. F. M. Delano, the porch-gate was erected in 1896. And those old eyes could "look upon Transfiguration" and see "the fulfillment of all that had been involved in an almost life-long desire."

One thing was denied: that he be permitted to "reach the fiftieth anniversary of the church."

A dead actor was brought hither to be buried. The evening before, a friend of his came to tell me how suddenly he had died, just as he returned from the photographers, where he had been taken as some king in some play, his favorite character, while, with out-stretched hand, he was saying, "**THE KING NEVER WAITS!**"

When I had finished the Burial Office, I said to the large congregation, that was seldom in a Church, unless at a funeral: "My friends, one

word. Two voices came to us here today. The one from that coffin—from our dead brother. It says: 'THE KING NEVER WAITS.' The King of Terrors—Death—never waits for us. . . ."

Less than eleven months to go, to turn the desired half-century mark! But THE KING NEVER WAITS.

On November 17, 1897, Dr. Houghton was present at the early Celebration of the Holy Communion—7 A. M. At 9, he read Matins. His round of duties during the day. The shadows of the afternoon were deepening into twilight, when, suddenly, the inevitable summons came. He was hurried to his bedroom. Evensong was being read in the Chantry by one of the Curates. The Curate was called from the Chantry. As he entered the bedroom, he began the prayers for the dying.

Two days later, in the little Chantry in which Dr. Houghton had so often said the daily Mass and Matins and Evensong, his body lay in its coffin.

The doors of the Church were opened at ten in the morning. Rich, poor, white, colored, old folks, little children, the righteous and the frail, those who professedly trod the straight and narrow way, those who openly walked the primrose path—the motley humanity of a great city—filed by the bier, took a last look at that kindly old face.

What a synthesis of life, if one could tell the memories stirred by that leave-taking!

Thousands had passed by the open coffin when the church doors were closed at sunset.

From nightfall to dawn, the sisters of Saint Mary kept vigil at the bier.

*“While thy soul is upward winging,
Home through the night.”*

Early in the morning there were people waiting for the doors to be opened, toilers of the dark, who could come at no other hour to offer a prayer for their friend who was gone on the far journey.

Many were in the Church at 7 A. M. when a Requiem Mass was celebrated.

Before 10, the hour of the funeral, every seat in the church was occupied. Some hundreds stood in the street.

The coffin was closed and covered with a black pall on which was embroidered the prayer that, not many months before, Dr. Houghton had asked the poor women, the tenement dwellers, members of St. Anna's Guild, to offer when he had gone "to the country that lies beyond the seas and the sunset:"

Grant him, Lord, eternal rest: and let light
perpetual shine upon him.

As the bier was borne from the Chantry, up the main aisle, the opening sentences of the Burial

Office, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," were read by the Bishop of the diocese, the Right Reverend Doctor Henry Codman Potter.

Those whom a common sorrow had brought to The Little Church, included all sorts and conditions of men; but two professions were noticeable for the number of their distinguished members—the clerical and the theatrical.

There were clergy representing the dioceses of New York, New Jersey, Long Island, Albany, Newark, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine; there were delegations from the Lamb's Club, the Players' Club, the Twelfth Night Club, the Actors' Fund, the Elks, and the Actors' National Protective Union.

Among the many floral pieces banked about the bier, was one from the New York Pilot Association, another from the New Jersey Pilot Association.

Striking symbolism in those two flower gifts!

The Second Man

MAXIMUS IN MINIMIS

IF I were to write an epitaph for Dr. George Clarke Houghton:

In an Age of Brass,
He Sang not of Himself.

Dr. Houghton prepared notes for a history of The Little Church. The two hundred and ten pages of typewritten manuscript are apportioned—

To his uncle's rectorship.....	95	pages
To a lovingly minute descrip-		
tion of the church.....	65	"
To his own rectorship.....	50	"

Of those 50 pages, 15 are given to a description of memorials; 9, to parish activities; 8, to repairs and alterations made in the church; 6, to the observation of Festival days; 6, to his experiences in marrying people; 2, to the testimonial given to Mr. Dod, organist and choirmaster, after twenty-five

years of service; just 4 pages that are strictly biographical.

MEMORIALS TO HIS UNCLE

A large bronze tablet placed in the vestibule of the church;

A life-size, bronze bust, placed in the recess, where the nave and the transept join;

A processional cross;

Communion vessels embedded with precious stones;

Endowment of the first pew in the Transept, always known as the "Rector's Pew," for the use of visiting clergy;

A series of twelve windows on the north side of the Chantry;

A fund for the purchase of Holy vessels for parishes unable to provide Holy vessels for themselves;

A Mortuary Chapel.

His own name he had lettered on the wooden bulletin-board. The only other thing that in any-wise directed attention to him personally, was a little sign which welcomed all those in "trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity."

A short chapter; but it tells much.

A VINEYARD IN HOBOKEN

IT is back in the early '60s.

A small boy, school books under his arm, opens the side-gate that leads to the Rectory of the Church of the Transfiguration. Immediately a window is raised in the Rectory, and a woman leans out.

"Little boy! little boy! use the other gate!"

The small boy turns back into Twenty-ninth Street, and, entering by the main gate, passes through the churchyard, to the parish school above the Chantry.

The small boy is the Rector's nephew; the woman at the window is the Rector's wife.

"Oh," says she, later, "I thought it was one of the other school boys."

Sensitive, temperamental—that rebuff at the Rectory gate cut like a whiplash. The explanation is no balm to the sting.

Three score years pass.

The Rev. Dr. George Clarke Houghton, an old man, long an invalid, is leaving the Rectory with his daughter. It is one of the last times that he is

to pass through that side-gate. It gets in his way.

“Pesky gate!” And the venerable clergyman gives it a kick.

Says his daughter: “You never have liked that gate—have you?—*little boy*.”

“No, I’ve always hated it. I always go out the other gate when I can.”

A little, human incident, typical of the man. No shining, spotless saint, but a *real man*: strong in much that needed strength, but enough of the weaknesses of every-day humanity to make him a brother of the rest of us.

One of his foibles was a reticence about his age. An interviewer once tried to pry the information from him.

The most definite thing that you can nail him down to is that he isn’t as old as the church itself.

“How old, then, are you, Doctor?” he was asked. “Well, sir,” said he, and the twinkle came into the eyes, “I’ll tell you. I was just two years younger than my brother.”

“Ah! And how old is your brother?”

“Why, he’s dead.”

It is a reticence that is in itself a confession. The school-boy will readily enough tell us his age.

George Clarke Houghton was born in New York

City on December 17, 1850, a son of Frederick E. and Anne E. Dawson Houghton. The Dawsons, needless to say, were Scots. The family had settled in this country in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Father and Mother Houghton wanted Son George to become a lawyer; and—freak of fate!—parental and filial desires ran on the same track. It was Uncle Houghton who threw the switch.

The school connected with the Church of the Transfiguration was an excellent one. Edmund Burke, a noted teacher of his day, was principal. The Zabriskie, Gillespie, Kane, Curtis and other old families sent their sons to it. Of course, Nephew George attended.

The Rector apparently had the desire—common among men—that there should be one of his own blood to carry on his work when Time should call upon him to put it down. He had no children of his own. What more natural than that he should adopt, for ecclesiastic inheritance, this favorite nephew? Young George was persuaded to study for the ministry. He matriculated at St. Stephen's College, Annandale, graduating in 1867. He then entered the General Theological Seminary, New York.

The Seminary occupies a block square in the heart of what, in years gone, was Chelsea Village, Manhattan Island—a district of old, squat, home-like red brick houses. It was there—and fitting

place it was—that Clement Moore wrote that classic:

It was the night before Christmas,
And all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a mouse.

And in Chelsea Village, Romance with her bag of gay-colored gifts, awaited the divinity student.

He was walking one night along Twentieth Street.

A lighted window—a few chords on a piano—then a soprano voice singing one of Tom Moore's old love ballads. It was a warm, caressing voice (at least, so it sounded in the ears of the divinity student)—a voice that seemed to sing, not from the printed note, but from the heart. And there and then, Romance opened her bag and gave him the precious gift.

Who was she?

How could he meet her?

Inquiries finally brought him information as to the family living in the house from whence the voice had come: *there were no daughters!*

Months passed.

One evening, he dropped in at the Rectory for a gossip with Uncle George. He caught the Rector at the door: going to call on an old church friend, Talbot Pirsson—wouldn't Nephew George come along?

Mary Creemer Pirsson

George Clarke Houghton

A lighted window—a few chords on a piano—then a soprano voice singing one of Tom Moore's old love ballads. And there and then, Romance opened her bag and gave the divinity student the precious gift



The Pirssons (Talbot and his two brothers Joseph Poole and John William Pirsson) were prominent churchmen, all of them members of Dr. Muhlenberg's Church of the Holy Communion, the church at which Rector Houghton had begun his ministerial career as curate.

And when they called, the divinity student discovered that Talbot Pirsson had a daughter, Mary, whose figure was trim, whose eyes were blue and laughing. There was a piano in the parlor. One of those casual questions: Did Miss Mary sing? Yes, she sang in a church choir. And she sang that night. What was Balboa upon his peak in Darien?—had not the divinity student discovered the owner of THE VOICE!

And so they were married.

SOME BARE BIOGRAPHICAL BONES

Graduated from the General Theological Seminary, June, 1870.

Ordained Deacon in the Church of the Transfiguration by the Right Reverend Horatio Potter, Bishop of New York.

The following year, advanced to the Priesthood, also by Bishop Horatio Potter, the ordination being held in St. Mark's-in-the-Bouerie.

Married, December 27, 1871.

First work in the ministry, curate in Trinity Church, Trinity Parish, New York.

Transferred to Saint Chrysostom's Chapel,

also in Trinity Parish, serving as associate Priest with the Reverend Thomas H. Sill

He gained the reputation of being an energetic, effective worker. That reputation and two stories are all (from this period of early priesthood) that remain unburied by the dust of the years.

FIRST STORY

He had been in Orders but a short time. He wanted to learn to preach extemporaneously. The rector was to be absent one Sunday evening; the young priest was to occupy the pulpit. He prepared his sermon carefully, memorized it, delivered it without hitch to his wife.

One of the front pews was rented by three sisters, maidens of uncertain age, who wore side-curls. Neither time nor religion had sweetened these three ladies.

The Sunday night came. The novice entered the pulpit. He looked down. There sat the sisters, leaning back, mouths pursed. As he gave out his text, three fingers went into three side-curls and began to twirl. He gave out his text again—and still again. A row of maiden ladies with pursed mouths and twirling side-curls filled the whole church. His memory was a blank. In a cold sweat, he reached into his pocket and fished out his manuscript.

It was his one attempt at an “extemporaneous”

sermon: throughout his many years in the pulpit, he always had his manuscript sermon in front of him.

SECOND STORY

The Reverend Thomas H. Sill had recently been blessed with a son. His associate in Saint Chrysostom's Chapel was asked to be godfather.

The day before the baptism, Godfather Houghton called at the Sill home and presented to the mother a box on which was the baptismal date in large letters.

Mrs. Sill was touched, as women in like case are always touched; and in such key she thanked him.

She opened the box. In it, a nice wooden fork and spoon.

Deep embarrassment on the part of Mrs. Sill: had her thanks been such that they implied expectation of a valuable gift from the godfather? She stood, holding the wooden eating utensils, murmuring: "Oh, aren't they pretty?"

And then, from out a pocket, Godfather Houghton took another box. In it, silver knife, fork and spoon.

In 1879, he was called to a vineyard in Hoboken.

That city across the Hudson, had a cosmopolitan population, a large portion of Teutonic origin. It was not a promising seed-field for the Episcopal faith.

Trinity Church, Hoboken, had been erected in 1855. Stone was the material out of which both church and adjacent rectory were built, the design Gothic, the result a credit to the architects, Deutsche and Dietz. Another result, a large debt.

Twenty-four years later the church had about seventy-five communicants. Also, the large debt.

Here was work for a worker.

Houghton accepted the call.

He toiled eighteen years in that vineyard, and the harvest was:

A church free from debt;

A church enlarged by a forty-foot addition at the chancel end;

A church enriched by many beautiful gifts (among them—it is interesting to note—a reredos purchased by contributions from the couples whom Dr. Houghton had married);

A parish house built;

A congregation that included 650 communicants.

He had also developed a couple of side vineyards. In 1884, he started the mission work of building up a run-down chapel in Weehawken; and, the following year, another in West Hoboken. He made both of these vineyards flourish. Grace Church, Weehawken, and Saint John's Church, West

Hoboken, were independent parishes when Dr. Houghton left Hoboken.

Nor must we overlook the building—building in the primitive sense of the word, *a building with the hands*—of the little church at Pine Hill, in the Catskill Mountains, where Dr. Houghton spent his vacations. There was no church when he came; there was a church of rough bowlders and timbers when he left. One of his vestrymen, also on summer vacation, toiled with him. Masons and carpenters were employed: doubtless they did the greater part of the actual construction. But if the clergyman and his vestryman were deficient in skill, their spirit was willing. Throughout the workday, in overalls, they heaved stone, mixed mortar, carried timber. I would be willing to wager that it was a job on which there was much industry and much whistling. And when the rustic house of worship was finished, it was named after the church that Uncle Houghton, in the same spirit of cheerful toil, had builded on Twenty-ninth Street, New York. Bishop Henry Codman Potter, son of the old bishop, Horatio Potter, appointed Dr. George Clarke Houghton the priest in charge of the Church of the Transfiguration, Pine Hill.

From a local newspaper, *The Evening News*, in an article reviewing Dr. Houghton's work and wishing him Godspeed, when he finally gave ear to the call that took him from Hoboken:

The doctor has organized many agencies of work among the poor of the city, and is the pioneer of the self-helpful works in Hoboken which help the poor by teaching them how to help themselves. "House-work" classes have been formed to teach the children how to serve in every department of the household. "Mothers' societies," sewing schools where graded lessons in sewing are given, dressmaking classes, millinery classes, cooking classes, etc., have been organized and valuable assistance given to the different members in the homes of the poor.

In November, 1885, the State Board of Education of New Jersey elected him superintendent of public instruction of Hudson County, in which office he was promptly confirmed by the county board of freeholders. He has just resigned this position, after 12 years active work. The same year (1885) he was elected president of the Industrial Education Association of New Jersey, which has effected the introduction of manual training in Hoboken, Town of Union, Kearney, and elsewhere in Hudson County. Dr. Houghton was president of the Manual Training School of Hoboken, chaplain of the Widows' Home in Bloomfield Street, and of the Second Regiment National Guard.

He was also president of the Hudson County Teachers' Association, warden of St. Catherine's Home, councilor of Christ's Hospital, member

and councilor of the American Institute of Civics, member of the Academy of Social and Political Science, and examining chaplain of the diocese of Newark.

Not a man who let his profession run him into a rut, but one who knew the breadth of the highway!

Nothing reveals him better—a man *alive* to all the phases of life—than his catholic love for books: religion, philosophy, history, politics, education, art, music, poetry, fiction. I wonder how many there are who read ecclesiastical literature with an attentive eye, and fiction with the gusto of a schoolboy! To Dr. Houghton, the characters in a story that he liked, were real people; he would get as much worked up over their fortunes, as though they were his neighbors on Washington Street, Hoboken. At the dinner-table, when the family gathered round the evening lamp, he discussed the plot, his likes and dislikes for the characters, tried to foretell the ending of the story. The announcement of the publication of a new book by a favorite author was like the promised visitation of an old friend: he anxiously awaited the day, disappointed if it were postponed.

Of course a man who had allowed no withering of his youthful zest for the imaginative color of life, was fond of young folks—and the young folks were fond of him.

Stevens Institute is in Hoboken. Henry Mor-

ton, long its president, was a vestryman of Trinity Church; and during the eighteen years that Dr. Houghton was in Hoboken he preached many of the baccalaureate sermons. This was his formal contact with the students. But behind this, giving vitality to this, were the informal contacts. The ivy-covered rectory on Washington Street was like a chapter house of a student society. The latch-string was always out, but Sunday night was the rallying time. After evening service, supper was served in the rectory, and often a score of Stevens boys helped serve and eat. Then, adjournment upstairs to the rector's study, and pipes and tobacco and yarns. At these times Dr. Houghton was partial to ghost stories, told in the light of the dying embers on the hearth.

To the boys, he was not Doctor Houghton but just "Himself." That was his title, and it tells a lot. One is not surprised to learn of the influence he had on the boys, to learn that it was an influence that lasted through life.

A score of boys who helped serve and eat! What a deal that tells us of the mistress of the rectory!

Mrs. Houghton let the boys over-run the house, invade even the kitchen, make candy, mess up pots and pans. And—zenith of feminine hospitality to boys!—she let them use her sewing machine. Not only did she allow those barbarian feet upon that treadle usually sacrosanct to one and only

one pair of feet, but she let the boys sew *canvas*, *heavy canvas*. They were going camping on Lake George, and they made their tents on Mrs. Houghton's sewing machine.

Husband, wife, and an only child, a girl in her mid-teens. Possibly the attention of more than one youth in that ember-lighted circle, wandered from the ghost in the story, to the girl in the study.

Two of those things, so little in the telling, so big in the living:

Mrs. Houghton did not give up her music when she married. She sang, to the end—usually the old ballads—just as she had sung when a maiden.

Herself a great reader of fiction, the greatest joy that books gave her was the discovery of one that would delight her husband. So that she might bear home that quarry, she spent hours hunting in bookshops.

Yes, when Romance opened her bag in that old Chelsea Street and gave the divinity student her gay-colored gift, she gave—what unfortunately she does not always give—a gift that could stand the rubs of every-day existence, a gift that, to him to whom it was given, was still, after years of marriage, as gay-colored as he saw it in youth.

That rectory in Hoboken was a *home* in the fullest, deepest significance of the word.

Dr. Houghton received many calls to other parishes, but to them he turned a deaf ear.

In 1897 he was urged to come to the assistance of his uncle whose strength was rapidly failing.

I have a memorandum, made January 1, 1897, by William C. Prime, to be read at a vestry meeting:

It is time for his sake [the old rector's] that he select a permanent assistant. For myself, if Dr. H. would approve, I could wish he might choose his nephew, the Rev. George C. Houghton, and let the inducement to him be the selection of him as permanent assistant, and to succeed his uncle, who in the ordinary course will leave the church in the next ten or fifteen years.

His uncle asked him to accept the call: "Only you can give me the needed assistance in carrying on my work."

Dr. Houghton began his work as vicar of The Little Church Around the Corner, November 2, 1897, just two weeks and a day before Death visited its rectory.

SOCRATES PUT TO PARISH USE

To be the successor of George Hendric Houghton was no easy task. The unique place that the old rector had won in the affection of the public, might have lured some to attempt imitation. Others, finding themselves in that parish upon which the limelight shone, might have been tempted to play "the new broom"—sweep down the old cobwebs, display their own briskness.

George Clarke Houghton was a man of strong individuality. He was always himself, never an echo. But he had an abiding respect for his uncle, an abiding respect for the traditions that the older man had established. It was the nephew's desire "to carry on." He was a big enough man to succeed.

After *twenty-one years* in the rectorship of The Little Church—a stretch of time during which many would have felt that they had long since established their own traditions—the nephew said:

During these years it has been my desire to look back lovingly, to the history made during

the first almost half century, to see what plans were on that trestleboard for the landmarks of this day and generation. If it be so that I shall ere long give an account of my stewardship I could not recall any step taken that was not in accord with the founder's plans—nothing that would not receive his full approbation. That has been my aim and I have tried to fulfill it faithfully.

And when finally, after more than a quarter-century of service in The Little Church, the nephew passed on, the obituaries and editorials in the newspapers throughout the country, showed that he had kept unimpaired the endowment of kindly feeling that the founder had handed down.

He rounded out the second generation of a church loyal to its ideals and unwavering in its pursuit of them, retaining a distinct and impressive individuality such as not many metropolitan churches have possessed. (*New York Tribune.*)

There was one innovation, however. It was a brand new contribution to parish efficiency, a product of the man's personality, *sui generis*. He published a little church paper, and in the pages of it he put Socrates to parish use.



Dr. George Clarke Houghton

Rector of The Little Church Around the Corner for over
a Quarter of a Century

The Little Church had long been famous for its music. Each week, the "order of music" was printed and mailed to members and others who attended the Sunday services.

In February, 1900, *The Kalendar* made its first appearance: a four-page leaflet, on the front page the "order of music" for the ensuing Sabbath, the other three pages used for short talks on church matters—"Why is it that so few of our people in America go out for early communion?"—the *practical* use of the season of Lent—a dig in the ribs of "non-communicants or infrequent communicants or lapsed communicants or late communicants"—parish notices.

Nothing unusual in this; nothing unusual in the first few numbers. But as the Rector began to feel at home in the editor's chair, he began to "act natural."

WHAT KEEPS THEM AWAY

Daily I meet people who, for some reason, do not attend any church service. It is not so practical to preach about this to those who always come to church, and so I ask you, dear reader, to bring today's *Kalendar* to the attention of some whom you know to be neglectful of their church duties. Let me through this paragraph ask them: What keeps you away? "*Some one is sick!*" Well, they need your prayers and ours: come and pray for

them. "*Some visitors came in!*" Well, fetch them along; a word spoken, a hymn sung, a prayer said, will not fail to be of service to them and you. "*I am not very well.*" You look pretty well. You seemed well the other evening, and your strength was sufficient to see you through that shopping tour from one store to another yesterday. "*I am kept home by the children.*" Not while you were shopping, nor when you went to the entertainment. "*My husband wants me to stay with him.*" Well, you used to *bring him* every Sunday when the courting was going on; don't you think as much of him and his spiritual welfare now as then? You don't think that there was enough devotion poured, funnel-like, into your soul at some period of your life, to last you for the rest of your days! Just look about the house and find that Bible you used to have, dust off its cover and turn to St. Luke, 14th Chapter, 16th to 24th verses.

SUNDAY BEDS!

A rector "in one of our largest cities" wants this advertisement inserted: we insert; no charge. *WANTED—Three hundred hard beds for Saturday night use in my Parish.*

When the publication was three months old:

THE KALENDAR

With this number of *The Kalendar* we complete the *first volume* of twelve numbers. It has been a great pleasure *to me*, during these three months, to talk each week, *out of Church*, to about four hundred families, and at least three people have told me that *The Kalendar* was a very welcome visitor. This is an encouragement, and it might be presumed that *The Kalendar* would go right on in its every week issue. I think, however, that I will discontinue it for a while, although at the risk of disappointing at least three people.

The Kalendar has been issued without expense to the Parish. One good friend sent me five dollars to help meet the expense and I was greatly pleased with the spontaneous offering and the kind words accompanying it, and but for those very helpful words, I might have returned to the former method of issuing only the music program. . . .

Assuming the usual Editorial first person plural We make our bow to Our (at least three) readers, and lay down our "plural pen," retiring for the Summer months from the "Editorial Chair."

Autumn saw the re-appearance of *The Kalendar*. In "Vol. 2, No. 1" (throughout the

career of his tiny publication, Dr. Houghton adhered to this whimsicality):

The Editor, on behalf of *The Kalendar*, says:—

We have come again, but do not expect us every week, at least for the present, and as for the future, well, that depends! our expenses are \$13.00 per week, and—well, though we shall exhaust our resources on this issue yet no doubt we shall be permitted to come and see you again during the Autumn and Winter. We hope that you have had a delightful Summer, and are all well, and that you will continue well through the Winter, especially on Sunday! Is it not very strange how many people do fall ill on Sunday! at least in town, and in the Winter! It is not so in the country in the Summer and Autumn. Is it not wonderful how well every one is on Sunday, in the mountains or at the seashore? and so strong! Well, we are always glad that they are well and strong, and we shall welcome everyone back to the Church, and we are sure they all will rejoice in their Church duties and privileges again, and in the Music and the sweet voices of the Vested Choir.

Though it forestalls chronological sequence, let me give two more quotations in which the

editor speaks as editor. The first is from the issue of February 15, 1903, "Vol. VI, No. 11."

EXPERIENCES OF AN EDITOR

Probably everyone else has larger and more interesting experiences, but odd letters come even to the Editor of *The Kalendar*. One correspondent wrote twice within a week to ask that no more *Kalendars* be sent because she never read them. Another wrote that it seemed a pity, with such an opportunity, that it was so uninteresting. Another was "much obliged for the monthly *Searchlight*, or whatever you call your church paper." Another gave me the information contained in one of the half page paragraphs in the previous week's issue, and asked if I knew about it. One or two correspondents have chided me for sending them anything in addition to *The Kalendar*. These remonstrances came because, by inadvertence, some blank forms were sent, and that seemed to carry the thought that they were counted as parishioners. No, friendly reader, the *return* of the filled blank to me would cause you to be counted as a parishioner. The *blank* forms *carry to you* privileges, but no burden. After this month I will try to prevent any untoward mistakes. Envelopes are bought, and printed, and addressed, and a stamp placed thereon; the *Kalendars* are folded, and placed in the

envelopes; they are sorted, east, west, out of town, special delivery, etc., and sent to the post office. Four persons engage in this work and several hours are occupied by it. I won't count the preparation of the contents, and the printing, and the proof-reading, but the work mentioned above is considerable, and mistakes will occur; please be cheerful about them, as I am about all the chidings.

The second quotation is from the issue of June 7, 1903, "Vol. VII, No. 11."

VALEDICTORY

With this issue of *The Kalendar* the present Editor retires from pleasant and congenial work. The little *Kalendar* has won some friends during the year, and also some frank and kindly criticism. For *both* the Editor is grateful. He would like to have it understood by everyone that he had no thought of publishing a Magazine! It was simply his desire to have friendly talks with the people—fifteen hundred copies have been issued and distributed each week, and from first to last, many pairs of hands and very many hours of work, as well as a great deal of thought and system have been required to accomplish this. . . . Will *The Kalendar* resume its mission in the Autumn? We cannot tell how that will be,

at least, not just now. We bow. Pen dropped. Desk closed. Vale.

The first glimpse we get of Socrates put to parish use, is in the fifth issue.

Most of us remember the dialectic of the Athenian "converser," his method of exposing error and revealing truth by systematic question and answer.

Behold Socrates in clerical garb:

Friendly Critic:—"Are you never tired of giving out the same notices, with, apparently, so little result?"

Rector:—"No, my friend, I am not. First, because there are some present, today, who have not heard these notices before. And, secondly, because you at least have kindly observed that I (have no right to be *tired* if I) am doing my duty and that my very persistency may *tire out* the influences which are keeping some of my hearers from doing their duty."

Friendly Critic:—"But do you think that Confirmation is of any practical use?"

Rector:—"A man, who has been confirmed, told me—"

I am not going to repeat the "Rector's" exposition of the "practical use" of Confirmation. I

merely want to show Socrates' first effort in the editorial chair of *The Kalendar*.

Some months elapse before his next effort. But meanwhile he has seen a great light: he now lays aside his clerical garb and appears as "Walter."

ON THE WAY HOME

Clarence:—"Walter, we have been attending the services of the Church now for a long time, but you and I are not connected with the work in any way, and, do you know, I should feel more *at home* in the Church if I were invited to *do something*."

Walter:—"Well, I have been thinking of that very thing and it seems to me that we have both been "invited" to work, but I have never responded to the invitation. I was thinking about it this morning when I saw those young men come out from Sunday School, and some of them took their places as ushers, welcoming strangers and giving them seats. . . ."

Clarence:—"I would like to talk this over with the Rector. Is he sure to be at home?"

Walter:—"Yes, he is home every Monday evening."

Clarence:—"You must be the spokesman. How will you begin the conversation?"

Walter:—"Why, I expect that he won't wait for either of us to begin. He will know that we

want to be interested in the work if we go to see him. . . .”

Clarence:—“All right. That suits me. . . . We ought to adopt some way of doing our share in the support of the Church. . . . I don’t know how much you put in the plate at the Offertory, but I know that I am not giving more than about four dollars a year! and that is very little in comparison with even my small salary. Why, I spend about forty-five or fifty dollars a year on my tobacco! and about the same for the theatre. Nine or ten dollars a year on my newspapers, and about the same for a ‘shine.’ I ought to give at least twenty-five dollars a year to the church. I am glad that we have had this talk. I leave you here, but if you like I will join you in going to see the Rector about something to do that will help in the Church work. I will call you on the ’phone tomorrow. Good bye.”

Walter:—“Good bye. My telephone number is 1171.”

(At the time, Dr. Houghton’s telephone number was 1171.)

Some months later, back to clerical garb for a little talk with “Edgar,” in the course of which the “Rector” says that a “Parish Tea” is to be given in the Parish House as soon as the painters and kalsominers finish their work, casually add-

ing that "the expense has been a considerable sum."

Edgar:—"You will of course ask the congregation to contribute something toward the expense?"

Rector:—"No, I think not—I will wait for them to think of that, without any suggestion from me. It was a work of necessity, and I have found that members of the congregation are very quick in their responses to what is needful in carrying on our work. You must come to our 'Tea.' I must now say good bye, for I see that there are already several persons waiting to see me. Keep an eye on the work!"

Except on one occasion, some time later, when "Frank," "William," "Tom," "Edgar," "Clarence" and "Herbert" were discussing the possibility of building a Rood-Screen in the church, and they "stopped" the "Rector" to ask him about it, the clerical garb was now laid aside.

Just after the "Parish Tea," he appears as "Edgar." Four of his handy young men are talking of "the changed condition of the Parish House:"

Edgar:—"I wonder how much the repairs on the House cost? I believe they must have cost five hundred dollars. The Rector told me

that he would not preach any begging sermon for the cost of the repairs, but was willing to wait for the people to send him contributions toward meeting the expense without any suggestions from him."

He even talks in petticoats. "Melinda" and "Dorothy" are discussing whether or not the Church is popular with young men.

Melinda:—"No, I meant to say, when you interrupted me, that you are going too far when you say that young men generally stay away from the Church. I was late the other Sunday and sat far in the rear of the Church—"

Dorothy:—"Yes, the Rector saw you come in!"

Melinda:—"Why will you always break in on what I am saying? The Rector could not see me way back there and I walked in very unobtrusively when the Rector was facing the Altar! As I looked over the congregation in the west end of the church, and well up toward the middle, fully half of those present were men, and a great many of them were young men, but I could not find 'Edgar' or 'Clarence' . . .

Soon the conversation switches to the bills for the Parish House repairs.

Dorothy:—“I believe that if the Rector would suggest to the people the plan of paying for the repairs, some of one room and some one else paying for another; one paying for the stair carpet and another for the hallway, they would undertake it gladly.”

Melinda:—“Perhaps they would, but you cannot induce the Rector to preach begging sermons. I wish he would. Katrina Wing-flight says that in her Church the Rector does that on at least three Sundays in every month, and that they must raise a lot of money because Katrina says they are going to ‘consolidate,’ whatever that may mean—it must be something grand because Katrina says her Church is ‘going up.’ I suppose they are very high Church.”

And then “Dorothy” unburdens herself of a neat little sermon.

Melinda:—“Good bye, and, I say, Dorothy, I won’t be late any more, and I won’t watch to see what other people are doing.”

The Little Church was without a bell. Dr. Houghton was anxious to have one—better still, a chime of bells. He spoke, direct to the congregation, a number of times on the subject.



Interior of The Little Church

A chime of bells to be rung as a call to Church, and at other times, would be one of the most satisfactory things that could come into my life of outward religious observance. I am fully persuaded in my own mind that there can be no more satisfactory adjunct to what we have already than a sweet tubular chime, such as I heard in Coventry, England, very many years ago, and have waited and wished for and hoped that they might come here! I have listened so often, day by day, in London, to the chimes of bells in the various churches, but none sounded so sweet, so soothing, so delightful, as those dear soft bells and chimes in quaint old Coventry where the musical sounds were as of a wooing voice, and they who heard hurried to the Courts of the Lord's House to worship.

But his church tower continued mute.
Socrates turns up as a "stranger."

IN THE VESTIBULE

Stranger:—"Is this the Church of the Transfiguration?"

Usher:—"Yes, and this is the 52nd Anniversary of the first service held in this Church building."

Stranger:—"I have often heard of this Church and as this is my first visit to New York I

have come to see the Church and should like to have the privilege of seeing its memorials."

Usher:—"After the service, which will soon begin, you will have an opportunity."

Stranger:—"You have no bell, at least I have not heard one. I heard the bell of a Church on the corner ringing as I came through the street."

Usher:—"No, we have no bell. I have heard many express the hope that we might have one."

Stranger:—"A sweet toned bell on one of your towers, announcing the moment of the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist, would add very much to the solemnity of the beautiful thought which this Parish represents, and would announce to passers by as well as to the sick in this vicinity that the Blessed Manna from Heaven was here. If at any time a fund should be started for this purpose, I should consider it a privilege to contribute toward it. I will leave my name and address with you."

Usher:—"I will give your card to the Rector who will be glad to see you after the service which is about to begin. Please let me show you to a seat."

Through the offerings of a large number of the members of the congregation, a twelve-hundred pound bell was placed in the tower.

They were trotted out time and again, these Socratic marionettes. They gave Dr. Houghton, concealed behind the editorial proscenium, the opportunity to talk of many things. The quaint humor that was their inspiration, should have made them potent mouthpieces.

There was an anecdote to which Dr. Houghton, *as editor*, was very partial.

ANECDOTE

In olden times it was the custom of our two Wardens to take up the Offerings, or, as some then called it, "to pass the plate," in the middle aisle. Upon one such Sunday, after turning at the west end of the Church and while walking toward the Chancel, the Senior Warden, good Professor Dougherty (I remember the dear old gentleman very well when I was a boy; a kindly old man, always kind to me; and some are not so kind to boys) after a glance at the contents of the plates, was overheard to remark to his junior: "Rather light this morning, Mr. Butler."

I have come across that anecdote in a number of issues—fifteen years between its first and its last appearance. Possibly, the report from *his* Wardens, "Rather light this morning, Dr. Houghton," refreshed the editor's memory.

It would be a very incomplete picture of Dr.

Houghton, as mirrored in *The Kalendar*, were certain characteristics not limned in by the mention of several classes of little articles.

There were brief articles—sometimes a series of them—on church history, on religious festivals, on the symbolism of the ritual, vestments, ecclesiastic ornamentation.

Last week's chapter was a little long. This week's will be a little short. . . .

Every year a number of articles on Christmas and the Christmas spirit.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

You will not forget, dear Friendly Reader, to "gather around the Christmas Tree" on Thursday, December 28th, the Innocents' Day, and bring all the children to that Holy Infant's Christmas Tree, and sing the Carols. Someone will tell me, "But those are old carols." God bless them, yes, they are old, and always new. "We three kings of Orient are!" "Christ was born on Christmas Day!" "Ring out the bells for Christmas!" "Silent Night, Holy Night!" Oh! I would like to have everyone of you there at the Christmas Tree, and have you sing as if your whole soul was being poured out in praise of the dear, Blessed Infant Jesus. I invite you all, dear Friendly Readers, to come

and I will sing, just as heartily as anybody, for I love it. I love Christmas, and I love everything about it, and I love the Carols, and I want everybody else to love them, and I want everybody to love the choir, and the children of the schools, and, above all, I want them to love the dear and Blessed Child Jesus Christ and let Heaven and earth know they love Him.

Little pleas for help—any kind of help—for the many charities of the church.

GARMENTS, SHOES AND COAL

The Saint Martin's Guild is engaged in a very important work among the poor. Half-worn garments for women, men and children are in great demand—and Shoes! Shoes! What a gratifying thing it will be if you will send us Shoes—for men—for boys—for girls—for women—Shoes, and plenty of them—of course, not too, too much out-worn to be worn out! And when it shall seem good to each of a dozen people to give me an order on a Shoe store for half a dozen shoes, and another dozen people will each give me an order for a dozen stockings to give to poor people, so that each one who is shod can be fitted over stockings which have only one hole through which he can put his foot! Well, my dear friends, that will be a Xmas gift to the poor which will

rejoice my heart. And Coal! “Christmas Coals”—a gift of an half ton to a poor family so that they can cook their Xmas dinner [every year, over a thousand Christmas dinners, “a turkey and a vegetable or two,” were distributed]—so that they may have warmth on Christmas Day and way beyond “Little Christmas,” Twelfth Night—every day, heat to warm body and heart—every day, warmth so that teeth may not chatter so as to keep them from kneeling down to say their “thank you” to the dear Lord Who wants the prayers of the poor as well as the prayers of those who have something to spare from their own provision. Garments—Shoes—Coal! Give, and it shall be given to you to give, by the dear Heavenly Provider.

Nor should we overlook the series of “short stories” that Dr. Houghton published in his church paper.

“FIRESIDE SAINTS”

Mr. Gorham, 285 Fourth Avenue, has issued a little book of the above title, and has given me permission to print these twelve little stories in *The Kalendar*. They were written by Douglas Jerrold, who not only wrote *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures* and *Black-Eyed Susan*, but also *The Chronicles of Clovernook* and *Time*

Works Wonders. The *Fireside Saints* have each “a special shining virtue” to be imitated.

I.—SAINT LILY

Saint Lily was the wife of a poor man, who tried to support his family (and the children were many) by writing books. But in those days it was not as easy for a man to find a publisher as to say his *Paternoster*. Many were the books that were written by the husband of Saint Lily, but, to every book, Saint Lily gave at least two babes. However, blithe as the cricket was the spirit that ruled about the hearth of Saint Lily. And how she helped her helpmate! She smiled sunbeams into his ink bottle, and turned his goose pen to the quill of a dove! She made the paper he wrote on as white as her name and as fragrant as her soul. And when folks wondered how Saint Lily managed so lightly with fortune’s troubles, she always answered that she never heeded them—*that troubles were like babies, and only grew the bigger by nursing.*

In Transfiguration Parish there were all the activities of the ordinary parish. But, not without reason, Dr. Houghton had unofficially renamed this parish, “Everybody’s Parish.”

Its reputation for kindly hospitality, brought to The Little Church what many would call a

great burden, what the sincere follower of Christ would call a great opportunity: many, many appeals for help from those who, either through weakness or misfortune, had been trampled under-foot.

Here and there can be gleaned an indication of the total volume of appeal that poured into the rectory in Twenty-ninth Street.

. . . I receive often fifty letters and sometimes many more a day, and so many from poor and weary Convalescents who need rest and attention in good, pure, country air. . . .

. . . My office receives many applications, daily, for positions . . .

. . . Many, probably sixty or more, are aided with a lodging or meal every night, and on some inclement nights the number has been much greater . . .

Not cold charity, but kindly hospitality!
For the “poor and weary Convalescents” (a hope!):

If only we had a permanent home, with a few acres of good land, with shade trees, and fruit trees, and a garden for vegetables and quantities of flowers—a home for the homeless—and for those who in former days were

housed comfortably, but now have only a room in the crowded city—for those who were well, but now are weary with suffering—who one time had independent means, but now are almost penniless—had many friends, but now are “unknown” by those who knew them well and were recipients of their hospitality—poor and friendless now, and forlorn and suffering, but who yet with good air, good food, and friendly attention, may again be able to make good and amply support themselves, if only now they have rest! A home in the truest sense, where they would be welcome guests—self-respecting people—not herded together in an establishment as paupers—a home, without care or worry—a restful homely living that is far more than mere existence.

For the “underfoot” men (a reality)!

. . . The Service, the instruction, the sympathy, the greeting, the word spoken not only to them collectively, but to each man individually; the hope imparted to so many who are without work, and homeless, and downcast, and friendless; the handshake for those who have believed only that every man’s hand was against them; the warmed room, the music, the reading, the prayers, the words of explanation and exhortation, the welcome ex-

tended, not in what are called the “slums,” but in the centre of well-to-do life, not given to them in the tailored garments of the rich but in their shabby and tattered garb, some or all of these combined are extending their quiet influence, no less, but, I believe far more than the lodging or meal or victuals which these famished and bedless men receive. . . .

Dr. Houghton was a staunch believer in self-help.

Saint Martin’s Guild has undertaken to supply the poor with clothing at a nominal price. My reason for making any charge for the clothing (and the charge is only made to those who *prefer to buy* if the price is within their meagre means) is that the Christian Religion ought not to aid in pauperizing, but is bound to inculcate self-respect and self-support among all classes of people.

It was the same with the Coal Club, its chief object to remove the necessity of “the poor but self-supporting and self-respecting family” buying coal by the scuttleful, with consequent extravagantly high rates. Saint Persis Guild was organized to obtain positions for the “men and women, young and old, who are out of work and are trustworthy and capable, and *want to work!*”

But if a man were hungry—

. . . I believe that our meeting room would be filled nightly [with "underfoot" men] if neither lodging nor meal were given. Whether or not that be so is not of first importance; if a man is hungry enough to walk five miles for a meal, God's blessing will go to the giver of that meal.

Like his uncle, a devout believer in "High Church" ritual and all that it symbolizes; but, also like his uncle, a man who emphasized practical Christianity.

Nothing unusual for his motor car to be seen standing in a tenement neighborhood: mayhap he had taken groceries to some needy family; mayhap, a visit to a bedridden old darky.

The older generation of colored folk had a deep love for the church that had given their race asylum during the days of the Draft Riots of '63, and when age and infirmities came upon them, and they could no longer go to The Little Church, why—then the Rector went to see them. There was one old darky who, for several years preceding her death, lay helpless upon a bed in Lincoln Hospital, some five or six miles from The Little Church; but regularly, every month, Dr. Houghton paid her a visit.

"Transfiguration is not only a parish of families, but *it is a Parish Family.*" The sentence is Dr. Houghton's.

Folks who were married in The Little Church (I am not speaking of those who were parishioners, but of those who, simply because of its traditions, came to it from a distance)—these folks sometimes brought the baby there for the baptism; and, years later, brought it there for the wedding—sometimes, for the funeral.

Many of these folks wrote to The Little Church on anniversaries—of joy or of sorrow. When it was a memory of joy, the message was often only a radiation of their own happiness. Those whose anniversary was one of sorrow usually asked for a prayer for the one who was gone.

All Souls' Day, the day following All Saints' Day, is a day that is looked forward to most lovingly by a great many people, as the special day on which their beloved dead are prayed for by clergy and people in their Parish Church. Very many in the Parish will recall the "mosaics" the beloved Founder preached about this privilege. All names to be mentioned at the Altar on this day should be written plainly and sent to the Rector.

At another time.

Recently there have been many requests for remembrance at the Holy Communion on "Birth-days," and, it has occurred to me that if I had a private *Birthday Book*, the persons

MEMORIAL WINDOW



RICHARD
MANSFIELD



AS "BEAU BRUMMEL"



AS "PRINCE KARL"



AS "RICHARD III"



AS "DICK DUDGEON"



The Mansfield Memorial Window in The Little Church Around the Corner

The man, and four of his characterizations

whose names are entered would be remembered on every recurring birthday! I have already more than forty names to enter in the book, and it will only be necessary to send me, *not the date* of the year of your birth, but only the *day of the month*, and the book, arranged like an ordinary birthday book, will have such and such names entered on January 1st, and others on January 2nd, and so on through the year. On each day of every year the Priest who Celebrates at the early Service will have before him the names of all persons whose names are entered in the book, and he will offer a special prayer for God's Blessing upon those persons. I am now ready to receive additions to my list, and shall be glad to include every name sent to me. I do not want any birthday forgotten at the daily Celebration. Three or four good friends have written to ask if the name of a sister or brother, or dear friend, living in another city, or abroad, might be added to the list. Why not? We are a Parish Family and we are interested in those who are near and dear to all the members of the family; "we are members, one of another."

A year later.

Some of my friendly readers have not sent me their names for my Birthday Book. Pos-

sibly they do not know that every person named in my Birthday Book is prayed for at the Altar on each recurring anniversary. And even if they do know this it may be, in their case, like the Editor of *The Kalendar* who found, on the 17th of December, last year, that he had forgotten to enter his own name. I am thankful to say that the omission has been rectified and I shall be glad to rectify any other omissions, if the names and dates (not of the year but of the month and day) are sent to me. I have nearly six hundred names entered.

All this fosters the family idea of the Parish, and that is the true idea of a parish.

One Sunday morning in the early Autumn, some years ago, I was in a large London Church; and the Priest came into the Church just before the Service and spoke to one and another of the people, calling them by name, enquiring about the health of an aged father, and of a sick child, and a crippled mother. In the Service every act was dignified with solemn ceremonial, and at the same time there was an unmistakable air of family worship. Every semblance of perfunctoriness was eliminated. It was the natural way of a supernatural life.

Why can we not be more natural in our religion? It is Christly. It is just what Christ

wants. He said so. If we felt natural, and talked and acted, not in a stilted and forbidding way, but naturally in religion, it would create a new order of things, and make devotion a part of our living instead of an extraordinary act in our lives.

I remember a sweet little story that was told to me by one who was very fond of the dear Founder of this Parish.

She was a young girl. He had baptized her, brought her to Confirmation and Holy Communion. Sunday, falling upon the first of February, which was his birthday, she came to Church with a bunch of fragrant flowers to give him as a birthday remembrance. She walked into the Church and found that the Rector had gone into the Chancel, and had begun the Service. She walked up the centre aisle, and to the Chancel, and handed him the bunch of flowers: "Doctor, I wanted to give you these for your birthday." I can fancy that I see his speaking eyes and his loving face, as he thanked her for the gift!

She went back to the pew where she was accustomed to sit; and it was not until then that she was aware that there was a congregation present, that she was conscious that she had done an unusual thing!

God bless her, she had been perfectly natural.

Let me reprint a letter.

May 26, 1923.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Living Church*:

The anecdotes of the Rev. Dr. Houghton, late rector of the Church of the Transfiguration in this city, appearing in this week's issue of *The Living Church*, are admirable examples of his ready wit and his mental alertness. They reminded me of two instances which illustrate an even finer side of his character.

One Easter morning several years ago, Dr. Houghton was following a very beautiful and impressive procession down the centre aisle of "The Little Church Around the Corner." Suddenly I saw him stop, turn and walk to a pew in which there was standing an elderly woman rather shabbily dressed. He greeted her most cordially, spoke a few words to her, and then, with the simple dignity which always characterized him, followed on after the procession. An act, which was certainly unusual and which might have been startling, seemed, as he did it, the most natural thing in the world, and impressed me more than any other part of the service.

Later in the same service, when Dr. Houghton was walking to the pulpit, he found that on account of the augmented choir, one small

choir boy was standing almost entirely outside the stall and left but scant room for the rector's portly figure. As the Doctor pressed past the little boy, he patted him on the head, and gave him a smile which the child must long have remembered. I have never known any prelude to a sermon that could compare with that.

HAROLD H. BOWMAN.

You may remember, in the anecdote re-told some pages back, Dr. Houghton's parenthetical comment on Professor Dougherty "(I remember the dear old gentleman very well when I was a boy; a kindly old man, always kind to me; and some are not so kind to boys)."

Apropos, let me quote a story told in an editorial in the *New York Evening Telegram*:

Many years ago a boy fresh from the country was sent by a publishing house to get the signatures of three clergy to a legal paper.

The rector of a leading parish read it carefully and wrote in his name. Another famous cleric signed without saying anything but "Get out of the light."

Dr. Houghton was found at his desk whistling. Having read and signed, he turned to the messenger and said:

"Hello, young man, where do you go to church?"

"I don't go anywhere," was the reply.

"You young heathen, why don't you come to my church?"

It was thus that Dr. Houghton turned one who was destined to be a notable New Yorker into a stanch supporter of the church and himself.

From a letter written to me by John Boyce:

From February 1900 to March 1901, I was privileged to sing in the choir of the Church of the Transfiguration, under the organist, Mr. James Potter Dod. I have always looked upon that period of my life as one of the most pleasant, as it gave me an opportunity to come in contact with Dr. Houghton, if only in a small way.

He was very fond of his choir boys and would occasionally come into the choir room after the service, if our singing happened to be exceptional, and praise us. Although I was too young to record any anecdotes or incidents at that time, I recall how he took the choir boys to Barnum & Bailey's Circus in Madison Square Garden and we all had an enjoyable time.

Mr. Boyce, perhaps unconsciously, uses the phrase "we all" in the all-inclusive Southern sense, for no one had a better time on those circus trips than Dr. Houghton—nor his wife, who was always one of the party.

Of all the things done by Dr. Houghton during his rectorship at The Little Church, none is more representative of the inward man, than the building of the mortuary chapel.

During the past few years there have been many who have died in distant cities and rural districts, abroad and in this country, whose mortal remains have been brought to this Parish Church to await the day of burial; and we have reverently done what we could to give those precious relics a fitting asylum. But we have learned through our experience during the past ten or more years, that this cannot be so fittingly done as it can be in an especial place dedicated to that one purpose.

The chapel was completed in 1908—a place where the dead, regardless of creed, may lie awaiting burial, "surrounded by all that speaks of peace and joy and a glorious resurrection." It was dedicated to the Founder, Dr. George Hendric Houghton "who ministered so especially and acceptably to those in affliction, bringing comfort to their hearts in the time of their greatest sorrow and grief, and

was so devout and loving in his ministry to the dead."

From *The Kalendar*, "Vol. XI, No. 7:"

A MEMORIAL

Many members of the Congregation will remember old "Isaac Turner," the little old white-haired man, who for many years was a faithful servant in the Church. He lived in the Parish House, and Summer and Winter performed many duties as caretaker of the Church, conducting visitors and strangers through the Church, showing them the memorials, etc., tieing up innumerable bundles, and waiting on the Officers of the different Guilds and Associations. He has been absent for a year, living with his daughter, who took the best of care of him, on Long Island. He died peacefully on July 24th in the hope of an immortal Resurrection. May he rest in Peace.

Walter W. Griffin was a postman on Twenty-ninth Street, when George CLARKE Houghton, a young priest, just in Orders, was a frequent visitor upon Uncle George at the rectory.

Walter W. Griffin, a little grizzled old man, was a postman on Twenty-ninth Street, when George Clarke Houghton dwelt in the rectory.

In the mortuary chapel there is a bronze memorial tablet:

In
Remembrance of
WALTER WILLIAM GRIFFIN
Died
February 28th, 1907
Thirty-five Years
Postman
For Twenty-ninth Street.

“Father in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.”

“THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES”

*The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.*

*The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.*

Francis William Bourdillon.

FOR thirty years they had journeyed together; then a sudden illness; and thereafter one journeyed alone.

Death entered the rectory, April 30, 1902.

For near a month the little parish paper, *The Kalendar*, ceased its weekly visits. Then, in the issue of May 25, the editor spoke to his friends.

APRIL 30, A. D. 1902

May I say to you just the one only word that I can now say to you? Frail humanity cries

out: Would God the cause which called forth such loving kindness as you have shown might yet have stayed its coming! Would God the human influence of a love and work which was an inspired, holy, daily guidance, might yet be clothed in mortal garb, visibly in the home! Would God the going hence might have been, as the daily earthly life and walk, hand in hand! My heart goes out to you, dear friends, in the deepest gratitude for your great goodness. May God’s abundant blessed love rest upon you and soften and sanctify every trial which he may permit. May God indeed grant to you and to me, in every trial, His grace to enable us to put our full trust in Him, and yield up our whole heart and love in childlike faith.

“They wrought by Faith” and not “They wrought by Doubt”

Is the proud epitaph above them placed—
Our glorious Dead—who in their grandeur lie,
Crowned with the garland of mortality.
Because they did believe, and conquered
doubt,
Those who, in old time walked their perilous
way,
With the gray hairs of kingly sorrow crowned.
Who laid their heads upon the bloody block
For their last pillow, and amidst the flames,
Bore still their witness, and with quivering
hands,

Sowed every wind with sparks of fiery thought.
Because he did believe, Columbus sailed
For that new world his inner eye had seen.
He found. So Faith its new world yet shall
find—
But doubt shakes its wise head and stays
behind.

One must needs look far and wide to find more eloquent witness to a love that is gone, to a woe that remains, than those forty-six words: “Would God the human influence of a love and work which was an inspired, holy, daily guidance, might yet be clothed in mortal garb, visibly in the home! Would God the going hence might have been, as the daily earthly life and walk, hand in hand!”

And then: “May God indeed grant to you and to me, in every trial, His grace to enable us to put our full trust in Him, and yield up our whole heart and love in childlike faith.” For a moment, the priest shows himself, stripped of his vestments, a man in whose heart grief wrestles with faith. “Because they did believe, and *conquered* doubt”—

Just that one revelation of what was going on within: then the lips were closed. Not till years later, an old man, bowed with infirmities, who knew he was getting close to the foot of the hill—not till then did he speak of the one who was in the valley.

And meanwhile—

In Kensico Cemetery, among the hills of Westchester County, he built a beautiful house for the dead: of white granite, its Greek lines bespeaking aspiration, not dejection.

Every Wednesday morning (April 30, 1902, had fallen on a Wednesday) the sexton had ready a large bouquet, the variety of flowers specified by Dr. Houghton the evening before. The Rector celebrated the early communion (7 A.M.) and immediately thereafter went to Kensico. . . . The nosegay was left in the vault.

The thirtieth of every month, the same pilgrimage.

And these pilgrimages continued year in and year out, summer and winter, in fair weather and in foul. They stopped, seventeen years later, when the physicians gave positive orders to their patient.

Every year, on the anniversary of the day of desolation, a requiem mass in The Little Church.

Every year, on May 11, the day Mary Creemer Pirsson was born, an impressive service—many flowers, a stringed orchestra, a full choir, an hour and a half of inspirational music.

IN MEMORY OF MARY CREEMER HOUGHTON:

In the autumn of 1903, a Rood wall was placed under the Chancel Arch. The upper

part of the wall is of pure white marble, in large solid blocks, enriched with mosaics "symbolical of the Blessed Sacrament." The base is of Tennessee marble. The opening of the Wall is spanned by two bronze gates, over seven feet in width, that shut off the Sanctuary from the nave. In the second panel, on the epistle side of the Rood wall, a tablet of bronze and enamel: "In loving memory of Mary C. Houghton . . ."; on the bronze gates, in an intricate design of symbolical ornaments, the sacred monogram, the "M.R." of Saint Mary, and the monogram "M.C.H."

Christmas Day, 1903, a stained glass window was unveiled, on the north side of the church, facing the pew the Rector's wife had occupied, the subject, Murillo's Madonna and Child, the inscription, "In memoriam Mary C. Houghton . . ."

And on May 11, 1906—anniversary of that unforgotten birthday—Saint Mary's Chapel (usually called the "Lady Chapel") was dedicated. It is a very little chapel, but upon it Dr. Houghton lavished the devotion of priest and man: a colorful mosaic of ecclesiastical symbolism, a richly inlaid jewel-box in which the memory of a human love was enshrined.

Upon the bronze memorial tablet, also in the longitudinal panels of the glass doors leading into the chapel, the inscription:



St. Mary's Chapel

Built by Dr. George Clarke Houghton as a memorial to his wife

This Chapel was Consecrated

A. D. MDCCCXVI

To the Greater Glory of God

in honour of Saint Mary the Mother of our Lord

in pious memory of

MARY C. HOUGHTON

who, fortified by the Rites of the Church,

departed this life April XXX, MDCCCCII.

Pray for the happy repose of her soul.

The sacred monogram, the "M.R." of Saint Mary, and the monogram "M.C.H." occur again and again—upon the bronze memorial tablet, in the marble mosaic of the floor, upon the brass Credence.

When the chapel was consecrated, Dr. Houghton prepared a booklet, its cover printed in blue and silver, its pages tied with blue ribbon. In addition to the order of exercises, the psalms, the prayers, the Recessional, it contained a minute description of the Chapel.

From it I quote:

. . . the interesting ensemble of stained glass, exquisitely painted in the antique style, and contained in the six wrought-iron framed doors, and the three fairly large windows. The

doors represent in twelve most beautiful miniatures, the Life of Saint Mary, the Mother of our Lord, the windows corresponding in subject. All are copies from the Old Italian, or the German Masters, and, taken as a theme, they picture the "Love between Mother and Child," to which each painting lends its particular charm.

In Raphael's *Madonna del Granduca*, from the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, (window nearest the Altar), is shown the object of the painter's particular devotion. How much of that which is purest and most sanctified in womanhood he may have derived from his recollections of that early lost mother, the world can never know; and his was evidently an adored and faultless image, cherished in the inmost recesses of his heart . . .

Upon the brass Credence in Saint Mary's Chapel is an inscription in Latin: "Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

In his study, in his bedroom—on the walls, on the mantel-shelf, on his desk, on his bureau—photographs of his wife, three or four dozen of them, small, enlarged, colored. When he was in those two rooms that were personal to him, not an angle but what his eyes rested on the beloved face. And there was one photograph—taken just before the last illness—that he had copied upon

glass, a colored transparency, which he hung in his study window overlooking Twenty-ninth Street. By night, if he were home-coming, the study light made it "the face in the window."

His taste for fiction had always included detective tales. But now, they became practically the only fiction that he read, particularly at night.

An old friend, the Rev. Dr. Robert A. Shepard, ran across him in a book store, and was accosted:

"Hello you. Know any good detective stories?"

Few knew what lay behind that ceaseless quest; few knew that it was a quest for an opiate.

I think it is in "The Light That Failed" that Kipling says "that to every man is appointed his fear." Dick Heldar's fear was "the smooth green water above a dam," the Narghili's "the glint of naked steel." Dr. Houghton's fear was *the dark*. As a child, he hated the night and its shadows, hated to go to bed. After his wife's death, there was a recrudescence of the old dread. And so the light burned in the study of the rectory. He did the parish desk-work at night. That done the Rector sat reading detective tales, often to the coming of the dawn.

A while ago there was an article by Mary B. Mullett, in the *American Magazine*, "Why This Little Church Has A Million Friends." Said Miss Mullett:

For a long time I have lived just across the way from the green yard, with its flowers and the softly playing fountain. There was a certain upper window in the rectory which I, like many other people, knew to be in Doctor Houghton's study. Always at night there was a light behind that window; and we, who passed along the street, would look up at it—and go on, feeling somehow a little safer, a little less alone, because of the kindly presence we knew to be there.

And up there, in the study, sat a lonely man, beleaguered by shadows, awaiting the coming of the day.

How little we know our neighbors.

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE

ONE of Life's grimdest ironies: The man who cried out, when Death took his wife, "Would God the going might have been hand in hand," whose grief never yielded to the years—this man, day after day, year in and year out, was called upon to start couples, hand in hand, upon the old highway.

During his quarter-century at The Little Church, Dr. Houghton performed over seven thousand five hundred marriage ceremonies.

How many times must he have seen a bride give the groom just such a look as he had received lang syne.

*And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly.*

Did it put bitterness in his heart?

At the end of a marriage ceremony he always placed his hand on the bridegroom's shoulder and, looking him straight in the eyes, said in that deep vibrant voice:

"Be kind to her."

Then to the bride:

“Take good care of him.”

Couples revisiting the church years after their marriage have said that they never forgot those words; that there was more good in them than there would have been in a sermon.

And those words that he spoke to the groom in this little after-ceremony, were the words of his wife.

During the celebration of his golden jubilee as a priest, an interviewer came:

“What are some of the qualities and the ideals which, in your opinion, based on so many years of experience, are likely to make marriage happy to-day?” I asked Dr. Houghton.

“There’s one thing,” he smiled, “which I have always said to every husband I married. It’s just this: ‘Be kind.’ My own wife died some years ago, but when, in her lifetime, any one came to her with troubles or sorrows, she would say, ‘Just follow that rule in life—be kind.’ It is a very sweet rule and preserves much happiness.”

It is the only time that Dr. Houghton spoke to the public of his wife.

I do not know when it was that the hymeneal tide first began to eddy in Twenty-ninth Street.



1850



1860



1870



1880

The Brides of



1890



1900



1910



1920

In the *New York Herald* of April 10, 1904, I find:

Ask a cabman where is the best place to get married, and nine chances out of ten he will tell you The Little Church Around the Corner. It is known all over the world. Couples who have met one another and fallen in love abroad have made a wedding at the little brown church the climax of their trip.

Couples have been known to have come from the Riviera, Liverpool, Hamburg and drive to The Little Church Around the Corner the minute they landed on American soil. It has seen many a consummation of a love affair that had its inception on a homeward voyage on a liner, and the drive to the church has been made even before the luggage was sent to the hotel.

The last time I was in the office in the rectory, a girl came in, her eyes shining with happiness, a man following behind, as men have a way of doing at such times. The year before, they had come from London, to be married in The Little Church. They were now on a flying trip to New York—just off the steamer, and—well—here they were.

And after they had gone, down the churchyard path, through the Lich-Gate, the rector's secretary told me that the week before, two couples—

one from Switzerland, the other from Argentina—had journeyed across oceans to have their romances solemnized in this Twenty-ninth Street Mecca.

Arm-in-arm with this popularity, came the reputation of being a Gretna Green, a place where it is easy to be married, haven for the eloping couple, for the secret marriage.

Perhaps it was because the church was located close to what, for years, was the center of New York's night life. Perhaps it was because so many actors and actresses were married in *The Little Church*; and—survival of the old prejudice that would have denied Christian burial to George Holland—the public concluded that if stage people were married there, it must be a place where the nuptial knot is tied easily—and loosely.

Despite the facts, despite reiterated publicity of the facts, the reputation lasts to this day.

I'm afraid the world looks with lenient eye upon Gretna Greens, sees them in a haze of romance. When the unescapable bumps and rubs of everyday life transmute an over-hasty couple into bickering man and wife headed for the divorce court, the spot-light is no longer ruby-colored; but until then—why, doesn't all the world love a lover? and who more romantic than *Lochinvar*? No, I'm afraid the reputation of being a Gretna Green never kept a couple from *The Little Church*.

And how many it brought there, only to be turned away!

It has been estimated that Dr. Houghton turned away nine hundred couples a year, more than TWENTY THOUSAND COUPLES during his rectorship.

This seems an exaggerated estimate; but I have found three statements made by Dr. Houghton in which he gives figures that apparently substantiate it.

From the *New York Herald*, October 30, 1907:

. . . in the three months ending on October 1, I refused to marry 255 couples . . .

From the *New York World*, October 4, 1908:

. . . I turn away on an average one hundred couples a month . . .

From the *New York Herald*, March 2, 1909:

. . . I refused to perform the marriage ceremony for 120 persons who applied here in February . . .

Why did he turn away an average of two out of every three couples that came to The Little Church to be married?

Two of his reasons were those of a clergyman

who conscientiously followed the tenets of his Church:

He would marry no one who had been divorced, if the former mate were still living. This was arbitrary.

My position about divorce always has been that, from the Church's point of view, there is no such thing; that the sacrament of marriage can not be broken except by death.

He would marry no one who had not been baptized.

The reaction to this latter rule gives glimpse of a deep human instinct. Many a grown-up asked for baptism: though outside the Christian fold, he had come to the Church to have his marriage sanctified by ancient usage, and that sanctification must be without flaw.

In his other reasons for refusal of the marriage ceremony, Dr. Houghton went outside his *technical* duties as a clergyman.

He would not unite in marriage a young couple unless they had the consent of parent or guardian. He would not solemnize a runaway marriage, a secret marriage, any union that had the appearance of being hasty, ill-considered.

Here he showed himself a man who, instead of following the easy way, sacrificed time, comfort, strength, in the endeavor to save others—

usually total strangers—from the miseries of mis-mating. He believed that a hasty courtship was one of the most direct paths to the divorce court.

One of the most worrying of my duties is refusing to marry persons who call upon me, softened, it is true, in the cases of those whom I can persuade to postpone their marriage until full consent is given by parents or guardians. I am proof against arguments, and tears, and pleadings, because my duty is plain; but nevertheless such scenes are more wearing on the nerves than one who is free from this experience can understand. I have been kept in the parish office for hours listening to appeals and entreaties of those whom I could not consistently unite in the bonds of matrimony. Sometimes they get down on their knees and plead—both of them together. No matter what attitude the man may take, it is a foregone conclusion that a refusal will bring tears from the woman.

Of course I could turn them off curtly, but that would only shift the responsibility to some one else who might yield and that would throw the responsibility back to me because I had not used my opportunity to prevent the marriage or at least defer it.

An onerous, often a difficult task, this sifting of would-be brides and grooms. As a first aid,

Dr. Houghton devised a sieve—a close-meshed questionnaire to be filled out by prospective bride and groom. Among many other questions, the man had to answer, “Are you a bachelor or widower?” the woman, “Are you spinster or widow?” *Printed in red ink* were the following definitions:

BEFORE marriage every man is BACHELOR; no man is WIDOWER until AFTER wife’s BURIAL.

BEFORE marriage every woman is SPINSTER; no woman is WIDOW until AFTER husband’s BURIAL.

Do you think those definitions—brutal in their bald statement of fact—unnecessary?

Then meet the mental reservationist.

“Have you been married before?” Dr. Houghton asked the lady who wanted to be married.

“I have,” she answered, eyes lowered but voice firm.

“And where is your first husband?”

“Dead!” and then in a whisper—“to me.”

But the whisper did not escape the Rector’s ears. He fixed his keen eyes on her.

“Ah, but is he dead to the world?”

“No,” the lady stammered.

“I’m sorry. We can’t marry you here.”

When the applicants filled out the questionnaire satisfactorily, and had signed it, they were asked to place their hands on the Bible and repeat the following:

We, the undersigned, in the presence of God, hereby solemnly declare, without reservation or evasion, that the above facts, and all other statements, whether in writing or given orally, are true in every particular to the best of our knowledge and belief. We are of legal age and there is absolutely no impediment, opposition or objection to our marriage.

Many broke down under that solemn oath, confessed to lying answers.

A young man, of the type usually spoken of as "a clubman"—well dressed, easy-going, looking as though he took the world as he found it—made application. He filled out the questionnaire with acceptable answers. Then I put the Bible in his hands and asked him to repeat after me, the oath. Before we had gone far, beads of perspiration were on his forehead. He laid down the Book.

"I'll sign my name to a few lies, but I won't swear to them that way."

A young couple from Kentucky came to see me. The girl was the daughter of a Represen-

tative or a Senator of the State and the young man was her father's secretary. They said their parents knew of their intention of getting married.

"Does your father know of this?" I asked the girl.

"Yes, sir, he does. He knows all about it."

"And your mother?"

"She knows about it, too."

"Well, of course, you know you will have to swear to the truth of these statements. Are you willing and prepared to swear that your parents approve of this?"

She was not, and she weakened. Her father knew about it—she thought that at least he suspected it—and so did her mother, but she would not say under oath that they knew or approved of it. That settled it, for, although the young man was insistent everything was all right, it was clear the girl's parents were in the dark, as it were. So they went away and were married somewhere else. Later it turned out that the girl had come here on a visit and had telegraphed the young man to meet her. When he came they decided to be married. Her parents knew nothing of the girl's plans.

In October, 1907, Dr. Houghton announced that he had decided to publish the banns of couples married in *The Little Church*. In the

Church of England, in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Russian Orthodox Church the banns of marriage are called from the altar. But, in America, they had never been called from the altar or pulpit of a Protestant church. Here was an innovation at The Little Church, and newspaper reporters were sent to ask "Why?"

Dr. Houghton's answer:

Because I believe it will prove at least one check on the hasty marriage, which so often and so sadly leads to the divorce court.

I am not doing the unconventional thing in reading the banns every Sunday in the church. The laws of the Church provide for it, and it is a general custom in the Protestant Episcopal churches of England. Only in America has the practice been abandoned. The Church law provides that the names of the parties about to be married shall be read before the congregation, and if any one present knows any just cause or impediment why the marriage should not be performed it is his duty to so inform the rector. Sometimes I read the banns twice on one Sunday; but usually I read the banns three times before the ceremony takes place.

This is not done because I fear the man or woman may be divorced, or perhaps in the attempt of bigamy; but because the sacrament of marriage should be announced to the world,

should never be a secret, and also because after public announcement, and especially when the engagement for marriage has been of short duration, two or three weeks for reflection may prevent a hasty marriage, later to be deeply regretted. This is not a theory: in my experience I have seen delay prevent a very large number of mis-mated marriages.

It is evident that Dr. Houghton could have required delay in the marriages that he performed, without falling back upon the old custom of publishing the banns. I think that it was his hope that other clergymen, alive to the danger of the hasty marriage and the growing divorce evil, would follow his example, and that a widespread bulwark would thus be erected that would stem the tide that had set in toward loose matrimony. If this were his hope, he was disappointed: the old custom saw no revival in America.

On one Sunday, having a very considerable number of banns to read, each being written out on a separate sheet of paper, he placed one and another at the bottom of the pile as fast as they had been read. At length, having finished the number, he continued, "I publish the banns of marriage between—" then paused, realizing that he had gone through with the list and was rereading the first. Looking up,

with a delightful smile, he continued, "between a great many persons in the course of the year."

A man who was not afraid to be out of step with his generation, who did not shrink from being called that antiquated thing—"a conservative," who did not scorn the old paths, the old ways.

He had no tolerance for any but the old way of tying the nuptial knot.

A curate had conducted the wedding rehearsal. Dr. Houghton performed the ceremony.

It was a large, fashionable wedding. The bride and groom were flanked by bridesmaids and ushers, behind them, a church filled with relatives and friends.

The ceremony went along smoothly until Dr. Houghton repeated the words of the old formula:

"—and to obey."

The bride whispered: "I don't want to say that."

"—and to obey."

The groom whispered: 'She doesn't want to say 'obey.'"

Again Dr. Houghton's deep, resonant voice:
"—and to obey."

Then the bride's voice: "—and to obey."

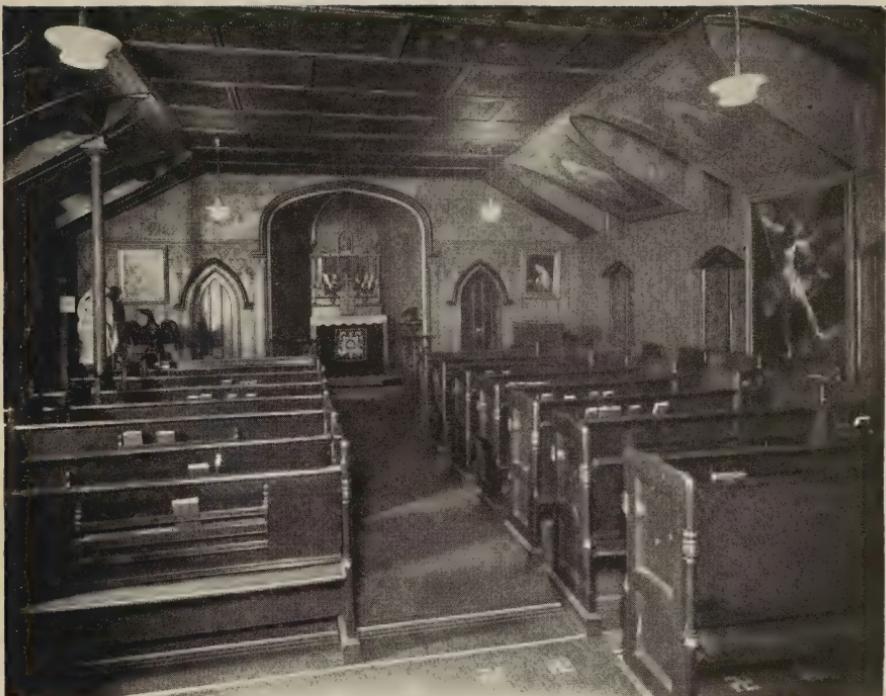
And the ceremony continued.

Here is a statement of Dr. Houghton's views on marriage, with illustrative anecdotes from his unique experience as the "Marrying Parson." It is based on the memorandum prepared by him for a history of *The Little Church* (one chapter being devoted to marriage).

Social conditions and relations, the untoward amusements, and the rapidly growing freedom of the day, here and abroad, have had much influence in bringing about a casual attitude toward marriage. The public at large makes too light of marriage. It is a jest to be utilized by the maker of puns, the builder of jokes, the cartoonist, the comic artist. It is far more apt to provide material for a comedy at the theatre than a tragedy. And yet, because young people are no longer taught to consider marriage seriously, it becomes in real life a tragedy, when it should be a beautifully rounded out domestic drama.

It is amazing to what an extent this flippant attitude has permeated the younger generation.

A couple entered the rectory office. They desired to be married. The bride-to-be asked: "Can any one who is married in this church get a divorce?" To a protest at such a question at such a time, she replied airily: "Oh, marriage is only an experiment." A half-hour talk left her attitude unchanged; and she and the young man were turned away.



The Chantry

When the wedding party is small, the ceremony is usually performed in the Chantry

I was called from my study one morning to marry a young girl and a youth, both strangers to me. They answered satisfactorily all the usual questions. As I started to read the ceremony the girl began to giggle, and she laughed as I proceeded. Stopping twice, only to have her giggle the more, I finally closed my book: "By your age you are a grown woman. I can not punish you as you should be punished for treating this service with such levity and disrespect. I do not want to refuse to marry you, but I can not go on while you are in this state. I am going to my study and when you are in a more serious frame of mind I will return." Forty-five minutes later, on returning and finding her in a subdued frame of mind, I performed the ceremony. She went through her responses with an expressionless face. At the close I asked her if she were happy. "Yes," she replied, "but you have taken all the fun out of it."

I know the difference between a nervous giggle and a flippant giggle. Time and again, the latter has caused me to take off my stole and walk out. I have let couples wait a half-hour, a whole hour; once I let a couple wait until the next day.

One of the most prolific causes of divorce is the hasty marriage. It allows no time for the couple to study each other and to decide whether

or not they have in common the tastes and the traits which make a union livable. Compatibility is one of the foundation stones on which a happy marriage is built. When young people marry on an acquaintance of only a few weeks, how can either judge of the compatibility of the other?

Legally, you can marry in New York in ten minutes.

Only a clergyman in my position can appreciate the social danger of the hasty marriage. Such a marriage usually means one made without the knowledge of the parents. That this is not only a mistake, but a positive wrong, for those under age, goes without saying. It is also a mistake for those who are over twenty-one. I know that the choice of the parents is not always the best. Many times parents have objections to the selection made by their son or daughter, that are unfounded. But it is a safe rule to follow that for a minor the parental sanction is a necessary safeguard. As to those over twenty-one, a marriage made without the parents' knowledge very naturally wounds them deeply. This is particularly true between daughter and mother. There is ill-feeling, perhaps a family quarrel, estrangement, at a time when the path of the young couple should be free from needless thorns. Marriage in itself, is a step which requires the best possible conditions at the start.

A girl should always tell her mother of her intended marriage. There may be a scene—there often is, no doubt—but if everything is all right, that ends it and all concerned are better off for having settled things before the marriage than after. Then the heart of the parent may have hardened.

In the course of questioning one young couple, the girl broke down and admitted that her mother did not know she was to be married. "But you don't know my mother," she expostulated. "If I were to tell her I was going to be married she'd tear my eyes out."

"Then I can not marry you under such circumstances. You must get her consent first."

"But it's no use trying."

"You must try to get her consent. You must tell your mother."

The next day I received a telegram. They were coming back that night to be married—with the maternal consent. At 8.30 that evening the chantry was filled with their friends, and the mother sailed up to me impressively and informed me that she had brought her daughter to be married.

The girl turned to me when we were alone and said: "Oh, but you don't know what I've been through."

"Yes, but it is better to go through it before marriage than after. You are all happy now,

but if you had been married without her consent she might not have extended forgiveness, and then the first cloud of unhappiness would have appeared on your domestic horizon."

At a southern resort, a few years ago, a lady approached me. "This is Dr. Houghton. Don't you know me?"

"Have I met you before?" I asked. "If I have, then of course I know you."

"Indeed you have met me," she laughed. "Why, ten years ago you refused to marry me to my husband, and by doing so you have given us the happiest of married lives."

She then recalled that earlier meeting. She and her fiance had come to me to be married. She was young, in her sophomore year at college. Her father refused his consent to the marriage because he wanted her to finish her college course. Neither she nor her fiance wanted to wait, and had determined to marry though they believed that the girl's father would never forgive her. I went into the whole matter with them, and finally told them I was on the side of the father.

"Go through with your education as your father desires. It will make you the better wife for your husband."

"But if I do, I know that father will not let me marry for years afterward. He wants me to stay home and keep house for him."

"You do as I say, and then, after you graduate, go to your father and tell him about your coming here today, tell him my advice, and if he refuses, tell him that I said he must consent in all fairness to you and to me."

The lady laughed as she recalled that conversation.

"You were right. When I told my father about that day, he gave his consent at once, and also gave me the loveliest wedding any girl in our town ever had. And because we waited those two years, our wedding was without a cloud and our marriage has been ideally happy. If we had married that day we could not have helped being made unhappy by my father's attitude. My husband and I have always wanted you to know how much you had to do with our happiness."

Two people, from out of town, came to me in the rectory one Sunday night. He was forty-four, she thirty-eight, old enough to know their own minds, but something made me hesitate. By questioning them I discovered that they had come into town for a pleasure trip, had dined well, and had decided to wind up by being quietly married. They had not thought of the mother and sisters he was supporting, nor the family who loved her. There was apparently no legal impediment, certainly they were sober. It was just a whim—and mar-

riage should not be founded on whims. We talked together long and earnestly. Finally the woman began to cry softly. The man rose and took my hand.

"Dr. Houghton, I am more than grateful for what you have said. We will take the matter up with our people and perhaps come back to you again—but it may not be for some time."

Probably family responsibilities and duties lay between these two people. When one fails in the duty to mother, father and others depending upon one, the seed is sown for bickerings, misunderstandings, family dissensions on both sides.

When a man has gone through experience after experience like these, he feels that he can speak emphatically on the danger of hasty marriages. I do not say that all hasty marriages end unhappily, but I do say that for marriage, as for every other important step in life, time, thought, prayer and preparation are essential.

I am quite within bounds when I say that more than three thousand "runaway couples," who have been refused marriage during the past fifteen years, have been persuaded to go home again, and either obtain their parents' consent or put off the marriage until such time as they could obtain it. [The italics are mine. G.M.]

The scene between would-be bride and groom and the clergyman who denies them their desire, is not always one whose quiet is broken only by pleas and sobs. Not unseldom there is belligerency.

A man came to the rectory with a woman he wanted to marry. They were accompanied by her uncle who was her guardian. My questions were answered satisfactorily. The uncle gave his consent. But when it came to taking the oath as to the truth of their answers, the man admitted that he was divorced. I told them that I could not perform the ceremony. The two men were highly indignant. The groom insisted that it was my "business" to marry them, that I simply *had to do it*. He finally became so abusive, threatening me with his fists, that my servant, who had entered the room at the sound of angrily pitched voices, stepped between us. With a calmness which I fear I did not entirely feel, I explained my reasons for refusing to perform the ceremony.

"Marriage," I added, "is not a machine-made contract. It is a sacrament of my Church. The performance of the marriage service is not obligatory upon a clergyman. It is entirely within his discretion. And now I must ask you to leave."

Through all this distressing conflict the woman sat in silence. I could not read her

mind. At my last words, the man exclaimed: "I am a newspaper man, and I'll make it my business to show you up all over the country. You think you can dictate. Well, I'll soon show the people what you are."

The woman looked steadily at him as he said this. Then she rose from her chair and slowly left the study. The two men followed her.

I have wondered if this scene opened her eyes to the quality of man she had promised to marry, or if she went through with the ceremony somewhere else.

The number of persons who apply for marriage while under the influence of liquor, is larger than the inexperienced would imagine; and the same is true of cases where one or the other is subject to undue influence. I am not prepared to discuss the efficacy of hypnotism as a means of compelling one person to do the bidding of another; but I think I have seen some fairly good examples of this sort. Sometimes it is the man who is the offender, but very often it is a designing woman.

Once when I was called into the parish office by a request for marriage, I found the man was almost ninety years old. It happened that I knew him. He was a man who lived in a brownstone mansion on Fifth Avenue. He was a man of considerable wealth, a highly respected citizen, a communicant of the Church.

The woman was a very dressy person of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age.

"Mr. Soando," I asked, "what can I do for you?"

The old gentleman seemed very much embarrassed and hesitated. Then looked at the woman helplessly.

"We want to get married," said she.

"I presume *you* do. But I want to talk to my old friend a bit."

I asked her to step into an adjoining room as I wished to speak to him in private. To that she would not agree.

"Very well; if you wish to hear what I have to say you may remain, but I do not want to be interrupted."

Turning to my old friend, I asked: "Isn't your home life happy, and are not your children treating you well?"

"Yes."

"A man of your age does not need a wife," I continued. "You have dutiful children and plenty of servants."

"Yes, I know that; but I am lonesome."

I advised travel, but he demurred.

Meanwhile, the woman had made frequent efforts to state her position. After some further plain speech from me, the old man came to himself.

"You are right. I'll take your advice. I

didn't want to marry her. She wanted to marry me." (Adam was still alive!)

The woman stormed and wept.

She said I had used undue influence on the weakness of an old man!

"Not so much as you have," I answered.

We put her in a cab, and as she was driven away, by herself, she thrust her head out of the window.

"I'll never forgive you."

And many another one who has met the same sort of opposition from me, has felt the same way, whether she has said it or not!

One night, some years ago, I was called from my work by a couple who came in well after midnight. The man was but a boy. He said he was twenty-four. Afterwards I learned he was a student at a well known university. The woman in the case was a chorus girl, rather pretty, but somewhat coarse in appearance and manners. They soon stated their wishes.

I asked the young man his name, and when he told me: "Was your father an officer in Company — in the — Regiment in the Civil War?"

"Yes."

This lad was the son of one of my old friends whom I had not seen for more than thirty years.

"Does your father know that you are in New York and are contemplating this marriage?"

"No."

"Oh, that's all right," chirped the girl, "he's of age. He's twenty-four!"

"I did not put the question to you," I replied to the girl; and then turning to the boy: "I knew your father. He was one of my dearest friends. I can't see his boy do this without knowing whether or not his father wishes it. You are both under the influence of liquor. This person with you may seem all right to you tonight—but will it be the same when you are sober? Now if you two will part company now and here, and you will come to me tomorrow with a letter from your father giving his consent to your marriage, I shall be willing to perform the ceremony, but not otherwise."

The boy listened attentively; and then the girl went up to him and tried to take his hand, but he was not responsive.

"Let me think about this a moment—" A brief silence, and he turned to me: "You have given me good advice, Doctor, and I am going to take it. I shall see my father before doing this. We were just out for a lark and it suddenly occurred to us to come here."

Then the girl began to weep. She vowed she would sue him for a breach of promise. We had to take her out and put her in the hansom. She fought and kicked and shrieked. We could

hear the screams even after the vehicle had crossed Madison Avenue.

I walked with the boy to his hotel that night. He did not come back in the morning. He married some time later—but not that girl.

Intoxicated couples appear at the rectory mostly at night. I have had as many as three or four in a single night, their brains so addled by liquor that they scarcely knew what they were doing. Sometimes one or the other uses this means of obtaining the consent of the reluctant one to the marriage. There are many pitiful cases of this sort.

There is another class of couples that liquor brings to the rectory. With these, it is usually the woman only who is actually intoxicated. As a rule, their speech, manner, dress, give evidence of respectability. They have gone out to dinner. The girl has taken a cocktail, wine, and, being unused to intoxicants, gets in such a condition that she dare not go home. What is to be done? Why, get married!

Amazing as it may seem, I have had young men tell me that the girl was afraid to go home in an intoxicated condition, and that he did not know what else to do but marry her!

I have no doubt that, despite my urgings that the one only course was to take the girl to her home and face whatever storm there might be



"The Marrying Parson"

Behind him, the little green door through which thousands of brides and grooms have passed.

That door opened into no Gretna Green. Dr. Houghton performed over seven thousand five hundred marriage ceremonies: he refused the ceremony to over twenty thousand couples.

—I have no doubt that many of these couples went elsewhere—to their sorrow.

All rules, save one, were brushed aside for the bride who confessed that she—had come too late. That one rule that stood, inexorable, despite pleas, tears, piteous exhibitions of despair, was that the marriage certificate would not be dated back. The certificate bore the date of the day on which she was married, let the date of the birth of her first-born be what it might.

To the eye of one who sees hundreds of brides, something—perhaps merely in the manner, in the speech—gives hint of the secret burden. If this suspicion were aroused, and the suspicion were confirmed by a confession (it is astonishing how, under the most indirect, tactful questioning, the barriers of silence are swept away) the marriage was performed immediately, regardless of other rules.

When it became a question of marrying the parents of an unborn child, there was another life to consider—an innocent to be saved from the stigma of illegitimacy.

Dr. Houghton's attitude toward marriages of this sort—also his kindness toward two people whom The Righteous would have treated as moral delinquents—is shown in the following incident, related to me by his secretary.

Sunday afternoon, just before the Evensong service, a taxi drew up. Down the churchyard

path came two couples, one young, the other middle-aged. All were silent, sober-faced. No one would have guessed that it was a wedding party.

In the office of the rectory, the young couple stood in the background, close to the wall. It was the middle-aged man who spoke. The girl was his daughter. She and "this young man" (he was only a lad) had come to be married. They (the girl's parents) wanted the ceremony performed immediately.

The Rector's secretary explained that this was impossible; that the law required that a license be secured before marriage; and that, the day being Sunday, the license bureau was closed.

Then the story was told:

The girl was "in trouble"—had been for some time; the father of the child was a sailor; his ship was to sail that night, at midnight; he would not be home again for a month or more.

The secretary went upstairs, and put the case before Dr. Houghton.

"Call up Mr. Scully at his home." [The man in charge of the marriage license bureau.] "If you reach him, ask him if he won't, as a special favor to me, go down to his office and issue a license for this couple."

A little later, Dr. Houghton came down the stairs, on his way into the church. He stopped at the door.

"Have you reached Mr. Scully?"

"No."

"Keep on trying."

The wedding party sat in silence. From the open windows of the Chantry came the intoning of the evening service.

Then, through the church door, came the congregation, pausing, in little groups for chat, strolling homeward in the hush of a beautiful Sabbath twilight.

On the stairway, holding up his cassock with one hand, Dr. Houghton paused.

"Any luck?"

"No; I haven't been able to reach Mr. Scully."

"Well, I may go to jail or pay a fine, but marry them I will."

The wedding party followed him upstairs, to the little oratory that opened off the reception room. The secretary accompanied them to act as a witness.

The service was read with that fine sympathy that Dr. Houghton could put in his voice when his heart prompted him.

When the service came to that part where the ring is used, the clergyman turned to the lad, hand extended.

"I—I didn't get a ring," he stammered.

Dr. Houghton reached over to a little shelf.

"I bought this ring in London many years

ago. It has been resting here altogether too long."

He handed it to his secretary.

"Don't you think you can polish it up a little?"

She went to the maid's pantry and hurriedly used some silver polish.

When she brought it back, Dr. Houghton glanced at it.

"You didn't get that ring as bright as it ought to be."

He handed it to the groom. As the lad slipped it on the girl's finger, the two exchanged a quick glance—the first, since they had passed through the churchyard gate, that was intimate, free from shadow.

And the faces of the bride's parents had relaxed. In their eyes were tears.

The giving of that ring, and the manner of giving it, was the little human touch that melted the stern grimness of that wedding ceremony.

Two years later, Dr. Houghton received a letter. It was from the girl's mother. Her daughter and son-in-law were happy and doing well—so also was a granddaughter.

From a letter, one of many pitched in the same key, that I have found in the old black-leather valise:

MY DEAR MR. HOUGHTON:

It has been three happy years to-day since you made Laura B—— and John McC—— one, and I cannot resist the temptation of writing and telling you that God never gave a woman a better man than he has been to me.

[A paragraph recounting their modest success.]

God has indeed blessed us, and may He wonderfully bless the man who made us one.

Please pardon me, I *had* to tell you.

Very sincerely yours,

LAURA McC——.

When the newspaper men came to see Dr. Houghton on his golden jubilee—an old man looking back over his life—he said:

“One of my pleasantest and most satisfactory recollections is that I have started so many men and women, the greater number of them young, on the road to two of the greatest and most normal of human experiences—marriage and parenthood. I like to believe that most of the marriages I have performed, if not all, have turned out happily.”

SOBS AND SMILES

How much of human nature they see at The Little Church! Happiness, Sorrow, Comedy, Tragedy—now one, now the other, is the master of the show.

The scene was usually that dingy little room in the basement of the rectory, where, behind a big, flat-topped desk, sat the local Rhadamanthus, the secretary to the rector. All day long she sat behind that desk, waiting to make arrangements for marriages, baptisms, funerals. I use the past tense; for the successor of the late Dr. Houghton has remodelled the rectory, and the basement room has lost its dinginess, has lost the shelves of disordered books and the old pictures and the other haphazard accumulations of the years. The renovated room is more orderly, more convenient; still, one can not avoid a regret for the passing of the time-stained background—it seemed a place where the ghosts of old things could find habitation.

A tall, handsome young man hurried into the room. His voice was subdued, tense. It was ap-

parent that he was holding a tight check on his emotions.

"Can you perform a marriage ceremony immediately?"

"We never care to do it unless there are exceptional circumstances."

"There are exceptional circumstances: the young lady may die at any moment."

"Why!—where is she?"

"At the——Hotel."

Then came the old story of unwedded love, with a sequel of malpractice. But "no sin can be a barrier," and so, within the hour there was a bedside marriage.

It was a Summer day and the door stood open.

"Here come the Babes-in-the-Woods to be married," laughingly remarked some one standing in the room, as a couple, a youth and a maiden, turned from the street and came down the churchyard path.

Sure enough they had come to be made man and wife. Some one had erred at the License Bureau, for they had the credential required by law.

"Who knows about this marriage?"

"Nobody," responded the would-be bridegroom.

"And you've come all the way from Philadelphia?"

"Yes, ma'am."

The secretary turned to the girl:

“Where are your father and mother?”

“They’re dead.”

“With whom were you living?”

“With Aunty.”

“Now, little girl, do you think this is giving Aunty a square deal?”

Sniffles, then sobs.

“No, ma’am; we’ll go right home again.”

And, waiting just long enough for eyes to be dried, the Babes-in-the-Woods walked back, down the churchyard path, leaving their license behind them.

He was a little man, and he came alone to make arrangements for the wedding. He answered the necessary questions; the day and hour of the ceremony were fixed.

Then he asked:

“Wouldn’t you like to see the wedding ring?”

Out of his vest pocket he took a chamois bag, and out of that he took a beautifully chased platinum ring set with diamonds.

“Oh, what a fine ring!” exclaimed the secretary. “But I should think you would be afraid of losing it.”

“Trust me to take good care of it,” he reassured her, exhibiting a huge safety-pin with which he fastened it in his vest pocket.

The day before the wedding he returned to make sure that everything was all right. Again he exhibited the ring, and again he clamped it in his vest pocket with the huge safety-pin.

The next day, at the appointed hour, bride and bridegroom arrived, accompanied by a dozen or more relatives and friends. They crowded into the little room while the blanks were being filled in. At last all was attended to. The secretary smiled:

"I think you're ready to go into the church now."

The bride smiled, the relatives and friends smiled. But a blank look had come over the face of the bridegroom. He could only gasp:

"I've changed my vest."

The bride gave her age: thirty-eight. Judging by her appearance, she was telling the venial lie of her sex. Downcast eyes—this was her second marriage. Yes, a widow. The date for the wedding was fixed: a couple of weeks hence, in the evening.

The next day she was back at the church, "to discuss arrangements for the ceremony."

Would there be any objection if a friend, "who is simply a wonderful musician," played the organ?

No, there would be no objection to that.

Could she decorate the altar with flowers?

Yes, that would be all right.

Then she launched out into other details: the music that her friend was to play; the guests that had been invited; described her wedding dress, "white satin trimmed with etc., etc., etc.;" she was going to wear orange blossoms in her hair.

It would seem that all had been arranged, that all had been told; but the following day found her again at the Church. So also the next day. She came back so many times and fussed over the details so much, that the secretary became wearied of her.

The bride must have caught some hint of this, for she dropped—momentarily—out of her aura of romance.

"I didn't have much at my first wedding," she said. "This time, I'm going to have all that I want."

The night of the wedding came and brought with it a terrific downpour of rain. The bride and groom arrived (white satin dress, orange blossoms in her hair); but not a friend, not even the one who was to play the organ.

The bride, the groom and the minister sat down in the empty church—and waited. It was one of those occasions when there is not much to be said, an occasional "I wonder what's keeping them?" or "*Why* don't they come!" breaking the monotonous beating of the rain against the windows.

The hour-hand crept around.

"Well," said the bride, her voice lack-lustre, "I suppose we may as well go on with the ceremony."

"I'm perfectly willing to wait longer," said the minister, sorry for the blighted bride.

"No, we'll be married now."

Some years later, the husband called at the office of the secretary. Six months after their marriage, he noticed that his wife was secretive with letters; then he discovered that she was sending away some of the money he gave her for household expenses; finally she chanced to drop a letter—her first husband was living.

The office was crowded with the wedding party. All were silent while the bridegroom filled in the blanks. For the purpose of this story, we'll call him Smith.

The secretary looked over the marriage license. It gave the groom's name as "John Enough Smith."

She said:

"The clerk at the License Bureau has made a mistake; see what a ridiculous middle name he has given you—'Enough.'"

Without looking up the groom replied, dryly:

"No mistake on the part of the clerk. My

mother gave me that middle name—I was the seventh child."

As they stood before the desk they looked an ideally mated couple—both young, both good-looking, both radiant with health and happiness. Joy is talkative; they sketched their romance.

During the war she had crossed the ocean, driven an ambulance at the front. He was an English Army officer. They met, fell in love, and now here they were at The Little Church to be married.

They were unaccompanied. And so, as often happened when the wedding party was very small, they were taken upstairs to the oratory that opened off the reception room. The secretary accompanied them, to act as one of the witnesses.

No sooner was the ceremony completed than the bride went to the bay window and began to cry bitterly.

The groom was dumfounded.

"I've seen her under fire, but I never before saw her give way to nerves."

A few minutes, and she got control of herself. They went away, both all smiles.

About a week later a United States Army officer entered the office downstairs. He was a man approaching 50, holding high rank. He took a silver-

framed photograph from his pocket and laid it on the desk before the secretary.

"Do you recognize that young woman?"

The secretary looked at the face, but could not recall having seen it before.

"Wasn't she married here on such-and-such a date?"

Then the secretary remembered her—the girl who had wept in the bay window. Curiosity seekers often come to The Little Church, and so the secretary asked:

"Are you related?"

"Yes; she is my—my wife."

The record of the bigamy was shown.

The husband winced. He only said: "She went while I was overseas with the army—I had no idea she was not at home—she told the truth to the Englishman the night of their marriage—he left her immediately—it was he that told me in a letter." He turned to the door. In a dull monotone that was addressed to no one: "Three lives wrecked."

CROSSWAYS OF "ROADS OF DESTINY"

TURN from The Little Church Around the Corner into Fifth Avenue, walk south three short blocks and you come to the northwest corner of Madison Square. Now turn into Twenty-sixth Street, walk west about the same distance and you come to the Caledonia, the apartment house where William Sydney Porter, generally known as O. Henry, lived and wrote during the greater part of his years in New York.

Madison Square and its environs were favorite prowling ground of the author. It was inevitable that The Little Church Around the Corner should attract his attention. I think in some half-dozen of his stories The Little Church can be distinguished in the background, though in only one, "The Romance of a Busy Broker," does he mention it by name. I have no doubt that it was before The Little Church that Soapy halted, as related in "The Cop and the Anthem." Along the route taken that night by the vagrant, there is no other church that this description fits:

An old church, quaint and rambling and gabled. Through one violet-stained window



In all Seasons of the Year The Little Church Around the Corner has an Air of Friendliness, of Home

a soft light glowed, where, no doubt, the organist loitered over the keys, making sure of his mastery of the coming Sabbath anthem. For there drifted out to Soapy's ears sweet music that caught and held him transfixed against the convolutions of the iron fence.

The moon was above, lustrous and serene; vehicles and pedestrians were few; sparrows twittered sleepily in the eaves—for a little while the scene might have been a country church-yard. And the anthem that the organist played cemented Soapy to the iron fence, for he had known it well in the days when his life contained such things as mothers and roses and ambitions and friends and immaculate thoughts and collars.

The conjunction of Soapy's receptive state of mind and the influences about the old church wrought a sudden and wonderful change in his soul. . . .

It was from *The Little Church Around the Corner* that O. Henry was buried. By some strange mischance—one of those striking interweavings we expect only in fiction—a marriage ceremony was scheduled for the same hour. The error was not discovered until the wedding party and the funeral party reached the church.

Though Sorrow elbowed Happiness aside for an hour, it was very gently done. It happened on a

sunshiny June morning, and Fate must have been in a benign mood, for that autocrat, usually so unsparing, handled the incident just about as O. Henry would have done had he invented it and put it in one of his stories. There was just enough tangling of the light with the dark thread of life for dramatic contrast, just enough to illustrate poignantly the tragic truth that death stalks life. But a wedding day is pre-eminently the bride's day, and the bride of that marriage fourteen years ago did not know that the grim shadow had been cast athwart the very threshold of her new path. She waited in a hotel while the funeral service was read in the church, believing that another bride and groom were at the altar, that one romance had merely yielded precedence to another. And so it all fell out gently, just as O. Henry would have had it happen.

I attended the funeral, meeting by appointment, in the churchyard, Peyton Steger of Doubleday, Page & Co., the author's publishers, who had become a close friend of O. Henry, acting as his bookkeeper, banker and general financial guardian. Before going in to the service, Mr. Steger, who had arrived first, told me of the error that had been made in the church calendar, and that the bridal party had yielded precedence to the dead. The incident escaped the reportorial eye, for there was no mention of it in the newspaper accounts of the funeral.

The rector of the church, the Rev. Dr. George Clarke Houghton, officiated. As is customary in the Episcopalian Church, he followed the ritual, the only deviation being that just before the close of the service he read "Crossing the Bar," a favorite poem, read by him at many a last ceremony. A number of us have remembered across the gap of years the beauty and sympathy of his delivery:

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me,
And may there be no moaning of the Bar
When I put out to sea.

The pallbearers were Richard Harding Davis, Walter Hines Page, Dr. John H. Finley, Will Irwin, Don Seitz and John O'Hara Cosgrave.

There was no jam of people at the church, no such crowd as a newspaper man is accustomed to see at the funeral of a district leader or some other such personage. But it was a large attendance for the funeral of an author. The church was well filled.

O. Henry had died in a city to which he had come when he was a mature man, and in which, so far as any large circle of acquaintances was concerned, he had studiously remained a stranger. The attendance at the church was largely made up of those who knew him only through his books. It

was a touching tribute to the sense of friendship that he inspires in his readers.

Twelve years later, in an article, "O. Henry's Only Autobiographia," that I wrote for *The New York Times Book Review*, brief mention was made of this "O. Henry incident." Some extracts were published in a woman's magazine. By merest chance a copy of the magazine was brought to the attention of the quondam bride. She wrote me a letter that resulted in a meeting at her dinner-table. And so it came about that at last it was possible to put together the complete story of this touching little episode.

Let us follow the two threads—first the dark, and then the light—which were to become entangled, just for a few moments, on the morning of June 7, 1910, at The Little Church Around the Corner.

In the Fall of 1909, O. Henry, broken in health, went to Asheville, North Carolina, where his wife and daughter lived. He tried to write, but the stories that were in his head refused to materialize on paper. He missed the stimulus of the pulsing life of the great city. The following Spring (1910) found him back in Little Old Bagdad-on-the-Subway. He wrote to a friend: "Didn't pick up down there as well as I should have done. There was too much scenery and fresh air. What I need is a steam-heated flat with no ventilation or exercise."

Wednesday, June 1, he and William Griffith,

one of his New York cronies, spent the early evening bowling. O. Henry was in buoyant humor. When the last game had been played, he rolled a handful of coins down the alley to the pin boys. Then the two friends adjourned to the Victoria Hotel for dinner. In the course of the evening, Griffith said:

"You ought not to limit yourself to short stories. Why don't you write something that has a bigger, broader scope?"

"That's just what I intend to do." Then he outlined a story, one that he planned should run to about forty thousand words. "I'm going to get at it right away." While they were talking of these things of the future, O. Henry remarked: "This town is mine oyster, and I'm going to crack it wide open this time."

Two nights later he was alone in his apartment in the Caledonia, when the infirmities that he had been fighting so gamely suddenly got the mastery. He managed to reach the telephone and call a friend; then the receiver fell from his hand and he sank to the floor.

The receiver remaining off the hook for some length of time, and no voices on the wire, the boy at the switchboard became suspicious that something was wrong. He summoned the superintendent who found O. Henry lying unconscious where he had fallen.

Within a few moments the friend arrived. Dr.

Charles Russell Hancock was called. It was now midnight. O. Henry was hurried in a taxicab to the Polyclinic Hospital on East Thirty-fourth Street. On entering the hospital, the friend, knowing the author's dislike of publicity, asked:

"What name shall we register you under?"

"Call me Dennis: my name will be Dennis in the morning."

He had great difficulty in breathing. After reaching the hospital he had to be propped up with pillows. If he attempted to lie down he could not get his breath. He retained consciousness and knew that death was approaching.

As soon as offices were opened the next morning (Saturday) the friend who had accompanied O. Henry to the hospital telephoned John O'Hara Cosgrave, then editor of *Everybody's*. Mr. Cosgrave hastened to the Polyclinic. He was the only friend that O. Henry saw after the hospital doors closed on him. Gilman Hall, then managing editor of *Everybody's*, arrived just a little later, but meanwhile orders had been issued that no one be admitted to the sick man's room. Mr. Hall was positive that O. Henry would want to see him, and he plead, argued and finally stormed; but the doctor remained obdurate. And so the man to whom the genial eye of friendship meant so much, passed those last, long hours in the bleakness of a hospital room, only a doctor and a nurse, both strangers, for that final leave-taking.

Dr. Hancock remained with him until about midnight. Apparently the dying man realized that, with his labored breathing, the hour before dawn, when life beats slow even for the healthy, might carry him off. Just as the doctor was leaving, O. Henry looked up with a little quizzical smile, and said:

"Put the pillows up higher—I don't want to go home in the dark."

The doctor was back at the hospital at 5:30 the next morning. He saw that death was near. O. Henry was conscious until within two minutes of the end. His last words were: "Send for Mr. Hall." Dr. Hancock was the only person with him. He died at six minutes past 7 o'clock. It was a bright Sabbath morning. O. Henry did not go home in the dark.

After being refused the privilege of seeing his dying friend, Mr. Hall had left word at the hospital that should the expected happen he was to be notified at the Caledonia. He spent the day and night waiting. When the telephone brought him the news he immediately called up Mr. Griffith and Mr. Steger, neither of whom he had been able to reach the previous day.

The three met in that room, one flight up, overlooking the street, where they had so often heard a soft, drawling voice call them "Colonel" or "Bill." (O. Henry's friends were all Colonel or Bill interchangeably.)

The Little Church Around the Corner was selected as the place where the funeral service should be held.

They called on the rector. Dr. Houghton was very much shocked on hearing of the author's sudden death. He said that he had enjoyed his stories, and recalled particularly the one in which The Little Church is mentioned. Tuesday, June 7, 11 A.M., was the time fixed for the funeral service.

At 5 o'clock that Sunday afternoon the widow, not yet knowing of her widowhood, arrived from Asheville, whence she had been summoned by telegraph the day before. Her husband's friends met her at the Pennsylvania Station. There was no need of speech; their faces told the news.

She was taken to the undertaking shop of the sexton of The Little Church. After a long look at her husband's body, she turned to his friends:

"I think that is he. I'm sure those are his hands."

The sexton afterward told Mr. Hall that the body had been very carelessly treated in the morgue at the hospital, and that he had had great difficulty in straightening out the limbs and preparing the body for burial.

The body remained at the little undertaking shop on Fourth Avenue, near Twenty-ninth Street, until the hour set for the funeral.

Now let us drop the dark thread and take up the light.

For a couple of years Frederick C. Thomas, a widower, some years on the sunny side of forty, had been courting Miss Ida Louise, the youngest daughter of James E. Crossley, a retired land-holder living in East Orange, N. J. Mr. Thomas was (and is) a prosperous New York business man. His first wife had left him three children, two sturdy boys and a very pretty daughter, the oldest 10, the youngest 7.

The courtship led to an engagement which was announced in February, 1910. Of course June, the month of roses and brides, was the one selected for the marriage. The 7th was fixed as the day, 11 as the hour.

The Crossley family attended Grace Church in Orange. But the rector, at the time, was holidaying in Europe, and so Miss Crossley had the opportunity to indulge a romantic fancy that she had had since girlhood. "When I'm married, it's going to be in The Little Church Around the Corner," she had always said.

To avoid any chance of disappointment, the groom went to The Little Church more than a fortnight before the chosen day. In the dingy room in the basement of the rectory he saw the local Rhadamanthus. Yes, the church would be available on June 7 at 11 o'clock and Dr. Houghton would perform the ceremony.

It was to be a small wedding, the guests being limited to members of the two families and intimate friends, about forty in all being invited. A wedding breakfast was to be served at the Holland House, almost within stone-throw of the church.

The great day came and it was just such a day as brides would have if weather could be made to order. As it was a small wedding, some of the formalities were ignored; and so the groom went to the bride's home and together they motored from East Orange to The Little Church.

"Be very careful," said the bride to the family chauffeur, "I want to reach the church exactly at 11, not a minute before or after."

Meanwhile, Arthur D. Thomas, the groom's brother, who was to act as best man, went to the church about fifteen minutes before the hour, to see that everything was ready. As he turned off Fifth Avenue into Twenty-ninth Street, he was amazed to discover quite a number of people, all of them strangers, standing in the churchyard. He went into the church. The pews were filling up with strangers. Many of them were in black or wore some badge of mourning.

The sexton, black-gloved, professionally sombre, was at the door.

"The funeral of O. Henry," said he, "is to be held at 11."

The best man went to Dr. Houghton.

"A blunder has apparently been made," said the

rector. "The only thing that can be done is for the bride and groom to wait an hour. I will marry them at noon."

The best man's one thought was to keep the bride from any knowledge of the shadow that had suddenly fallen on her path. He hurried to the curb, and stood anxiously waiting, hoping that both hearse and bridal party would not be punctual to the minute.

Promptly at 11 the Crossley automobile turned the corner and drew up at the churchyard gate. The groom jumped out, and was about to assist the bride, when his brother checked him.

"Another girl has got ahead of you," he said to the bride. "You'll have to come back in an hour." To the groom he whispered the truth, suggesting that they wait at the Holland House.

The pallbearers were waiting, just within the churchyard, for the hearse to arrive.

"Wouldn't O. Henry have enjoyed this?" Will Irwin remarked.

Fortunately there had been a few minutes' delay at the undertaker's shop on Fourth Avenue. As the bridal car drove out of one end of the street the hearse entered the other.

The best man had acquainted the guests as they arrived with the hour's postponement, and the deception he was to play on the bride. The guests accordingly walked over to the Holland House, and the bride and groom held a preliminary reception,

while in the church the service was being read over the dead.

Immediately after the funeral service, O. Henry's body was removed to the Pennsylvania Station, for burial in North Carolina, his homeland.

The bride and groom were married at noon. The church gave no sign nor did Dr. Houghton make any reference to what had gone before.

After the wedding breakfast, the newly-weds motored up Fifth Avenue. An isolated mass of black cloud swept across the brilliant sky, carrying with it a sharp but brief downpour, so that at the same moment there were both sunshine and shower.

In the train the next day on their way to Lake Mohonk, Mr. Thomas handed his wife the morning newspaper. Putting his finger on the account of O. Henry's funeral, he said:

"That's the girl that got ahead of you at the church."

"Why—isn't that strange—there wasn't a wedding—it was a funeral."

Now that it was past, the news did not shock her. She was only sorry to learn that O. Henry was dead. She had been so busy before the wedding that she had not read the newspapers.

At just about the same hour that the bride and groom reached Lake Mohonk for their honeymoon, a widow reached Asheville with her husband's body.

"Life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating," wrote the author of "Gifts of the Magi." It was peculiarly fitting that, in the closing paragraph of his own life, Sorrow and Happiness should jostle each other.

“SUNSET AND EVENING STAR”

MAY 19, 1921: Jubilee at The Little Church Around the Corner—a golden anniversary that is near to being also both silver and diamond.

A half-century ago this day George Clarke Houghton was ordained a priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church; near a quarter-century ago that he became the rector of The Little Church; close to three-quarters of a century since his predecessor, his uncle, George Hendric Houghton, founded the church.

The older man, who knew this neighborhood when it was vacant lots, has long since turned to dust. His nephew, the boy who played “tag” around the lumber piles when the building boom covered the vacant lots with rows of brown-stone houses, is that old man who sits in the chair, on the churchyard lawn, in the warm sunshine, awaiting a procession. He had help when he went to that chair; he will need help when he leaves it.

Men grow old, pass on. Often their works have had their day and been forgotten, long before their authors are called from the stage. But the old man sitting in that chair can look at the work

of the Houghtons, uncle and nephew, and see it, seventy-three years old, still strong, vital, commanding both affection and respect.

The rows of brownstone houses are gone. They have given way to towering lofts and office buildings. The Little Church remains, an oasis of peace and friendliness amid the roar and rush of metropolitan business, the churchyard a tiny oasis of green in arid canyons of brick and steel.

But the procession is coming!

It turns through the Lich-Gate, winds up the churchyard path: Taper-bearer, crucifer, flag and banner bearers, members of societies, vestrymen, secular ministers, clergymen from many far-scattered parishes, former clergy of the parish, parish clergy, older acolytes, the celebrant, other acolytes, sacristan, bishops' chaplains, the Presiding Bishop and the Bishop of the Diocese.

That long, winding double line—how many old familiar faces are in it—how many scenes from auld lang syne it must awaken in the memory of the old man who waves greetings as the procession bears past him, a few grizzled faces of boyhood friends, some that he had known in his student days, many that he had known sometime during those fifty years of priesthood.

When the procession has passed through the Lich-Gate, the old man is helped to his feet, and, leaving the chair that stands near the little sign that he had placed in his churchyard more than

a score of years ago, welcoming all those in "trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity," he walks to a place in the line just before the two bishops.

As the procession enters the church, it moves more slowly, for the old man's steps are halting.

Every pew is filled: Parishioners, former parishioners, old couples and younger couples who in some by-gone year had passed through the Lich-Gate—into the world—"man and wife," representatives of clubs, actors and actresses, business men who have left their daily grind in the neighboring canyons of brick and steel, and a sprinkling of old colored folk.

The altar, the pulpit, the rood wall are banked high with flowers—a fragrant mosaic of friendship—many of the pieces ordered by telegraph or cable by distant well-wishers.

There is an elaborate musical service. It began with processionals—one of them composed for the occasion—when the double line began to move through Twenty-ninth Street.

From his stall in the choir, that has known him so many years, the old man reads the gospel, on each side of him an acolyte with lighted taper. That is his only active participation. During most of the service he remains seated.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Gailor, Presiding Bishop, preaches the sermon.

A celebration of the Holy Communion, by the

Rev. Shirley Carter Hughson, Superior of the Order of the Holy Cross.

The Rt. Rev. William T. Manning, Bishop of the Diocese, makes an address of congratulation, and pronounces the blessing.

Then comes that touch that makes The Little Church unique. Elsie Ferguson, on behalf of the Actors' Equity Association, presents a hand-illuminated scroll; Grant Stewart, for the Lambs Club, presents a silver loving cup.

And during those days of May, 1921, there had been rapidly accumulating, on a table in Dr. Houghton's study, a stack of letters, some hundreds of them. What a sheaf of good wishes! What a garnering for the autumn of one's life! I wonder by what figure many a modern Croesus would multiply his philanthropies, could he but feel the warmth, in his old age, of such a harvest of kindly sentiment.

A few straws from the sheaf:

May I be permitted to add my felicitations to the many that you are receiving? Nothing would please me more than to be present with you on Thursday. I am sure your former choir- and office-boy would feel more important than either Bishop Gailor or Bishop Manning, if he could be there to congratulate you.

He never will forget what the dear old church has meant to him, and what it has done for him. . . . (From a deanery in Minnesota.)

GOOD MORNING, SIR.

This to wish you every good thing in life and many more years of golden sunshine. If the others you joined in matrimony are half as happy as my good wife and I, you have earned a choice place in Heaven for helping to make this old world a mighty good place to Live and Love in.

With kindest regards from Mrs. J——, her Three Bonnie Bairnies, and

Sincerely yours,

W. N. J.

. . . I think back over those forty years of the fifty the culmination of which you are so happily celebrating and I acknowledge with gratitude the many, many instances of your goodness to me. Above all, I keep most in heart, your love and your comforting aid when my dear child was so suddenly and so tragically called away. . . .

Wishing you every blessing, believe me always

Affectionately yours,

W. M. P.

DEAR DR. HOUGHTON,

We saw your picture in the paper this evening and are so happy over it that we want to write and tell you so.

Mother told us all about this morning, how wonderful it was and how wonderful you were.

We are so glad you are nearly well.

You have remembered us on holidays and we want to remember you on *your* holiday by sending our very best love and a kiss on each cheek from

Your little friends

GALE AND FLORINDA C—

DEAR DOCTOR:

May I intrude just long enough to drop at your feet some hearty old school Presbyterian congratulations?

Yours very sincerely,

HAMILTON O—

From the other side of the world, near two months late:

DEAR DR. HOUGHTON:

It is a far cry from East 29th Street, New York, to Rue Dillon, in the French Concession of Tientsin—yet not so far that an account of your 50th Anniversary at our well-beloved

"Little Church" has not reached two of your "children," who take this opportunity to send a belated greeting and message of congratulation across the separating miles.

Much, much water and quite a little real estate has passed beneath the wandering feet of Anne and Dudley B—— since you gave them your serene benediction, all but eight years ago — yet there have been few of those 95 months which have not engraved upon them, in one hieroglyph or another, an affectionate thought of (and for) the kindly, all-human pastor who sent them out into the world, hand in hand, with such splendid slogans emblazoned on their marital standard!

May His hand guide and support you, His love strengthen and sustain you, and His spirit comfort and content you until such time as the Trumpet shall sound and you shall enter, in glory, into the House in which there are "many mansions," there to receive the reward which is surely in store for you.

With sincere reverence and felicitations, we are,

Cordially yours,
ANNE & DUDLEY B——

Except when there is a breaking of the tablets, a heresy trial, pagan dances introduced in Christian church, the newspaper of today gives

small space to church news. Yet this jubilee, this anniversary of fifty years of unsensational service in the priesthood, was chronicled in the newspapers throughout the nation. Eloquent evidence of the wide friendship for The Little Church!

GOD BLESS HIM!

Almost fifty years have passed since Joe Jefferson, seeking a clergyman to read the burial service over the body of versatile and well beloved George Holland, was told by a pastor of little vision that the funeral of an actor would not be permitted from the house of God over which he presided, but that there was a "little church around the corner" wherein it might be held. "God bless The Little Church Around the Corner!" exclaimed Jefferson, and into Twenty-ninth Street he went to the Church of the Transfiguration, where the Rev. George Hendric Houghton received him with sympathy and understanding. The name thus given to that church has achieved worldwide fame; wherever it is uttered men and women think of kindly interest, of benevolent assistance wisely administered, of friendship and inspiration from priests whose simplicity of mind is the reflex of their wide experience and truly Christian faith.

For George Hendric Houghton, as he was good and generous in life, was fortunate in death to have a worthy man to succeed him in the rectorship of The Little Church Around the Corner. This was his nephew, the Rev. George Clarke Houghton, who took up his uncle's office in 1897, and today celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of his ordering to the priesthood. There will be beautiful and appropriate services, magnificent music, the mystic beauty of lights and rich vestments, an eloquent sermon in The Little Church Around the Corner today. There will be notables and dignitaries, ecclesiastical and civil, to do churchly honor and pay official respect to Dr. Houghton; which is as it should be.

But more than this. As Dr. Houghton sees and hears these tributes to years well spent for others there will be another tribute to him. It will come from men and women, scattered through the town, the country, the whole world, who in sorrow or in distress, in the joy of love or the misery of disgrace, sought an ever open door beyond which, knowledge supported by brotherly love, experience enlightened by charity, trust in humanity fortified by faith in God, have bound up their wounds of heart or conscience or soul and sent them out with renewed strength to fight the battle of life. On the lips of these grateful ones will be

the words "God bless Dr. Houghton and The Little Church Around the Corner!"

(Editorial, *New York Herald*, May 19, 1921.)

Death came on leaden feet.

The illness that for several years had been sapping his strength, now tied him to an invalid's chair. Time and again he sat there through the night, unable to breathe if he lay down. It was a wheel-chair in which he sat, and his favorite place for it was in the corner of his study, by a window overlooking the churchyard.

Ghosts! a churchyard full of ghosts!

Doubtless, he called them memories—of old parishioners, old friends.

As the years have stretched in numbers, we have more and more often had occasion to march to the beat of muffled drums.

The old ranks had thinned woefully.

Memorial tablets—to those whom he had known for long years, people with whom he had worked and upon whose help he had depended—these memorial tablets were multiplying in The Little Church.

There was James Potter Dod—"our good Asaph," Dr. George Hendric Houghton used to call him—organist since the introduction of the vested choir in 1881. A little man, filled with a

big enthusiasm for his work; in his almost two score years of service, he took but one vacation (after a serious illness). At Dr. George Clarke Houghton's request, his college, Saint Stephen's, had given the organist the degree of Doctor of Music. Thereupon, the old man's sisters had cards engraved for him—*Doctor James Potter Dod.* He showed them to Dr. Houghton: "Do you think it would be good taste for me to use these?" and had difficulty concealing his delight when the Rector assured him that it would be. And now—a memorial tablet near the organ pipes that he had so often made vocal.

And there was William Franklin Adams, a man of education, one of those mild souls, unfitted to struggle in the big maelstrom, who drift into some little back-eddy. For years he had held a clerical position in the publication office of *The Churchman*. Every morning, 6.30 found him in the sacristy of The Little Church. He got out the vestments and the sacred vessels, and served at the 7 o'clock Mass. This was a labor of love that began in the days of the former Rector and continued for thirty years. Then, his health failing, he had to give up his clerical position. He came to live in the Parish House and was given a salary. He assisted at weddings, baptisms—was one on whom the Rector could always depend to see that all the detail of ecclesiastic ceremonial was properly arranged. And



Photo by Mrs. H. A. Hurlbut

Dr. George Clarke Houghton

(The last photograph taken of him)

An invalid, at his country home at Bedford Village.

His two visitors:

(Left) Bishop Cortlandt Whitehead

(Right) Bishop Sidney Catlin Partridge

now—a bronze tablet in the Mortuary Chapel: William Franklin Adams, Forty Years Sacristan of the Parish.

Close to that tablet, another: William Judson Minor, Thirty Years Sexton.

Then, in quick succession, seven who had been parishioners since the days of his uncle—old friends, staunch supporters—followed organist and sacristan and sexton.

Ghosts! a churchyard full of ghosts!

One afternoon, his daughter—faithful attendant in these years of sickness—returning from a shopping trip, saw by his face that he was in the blues.

"Well, Towser, what have you been doing while I was away?"

"Barking!" he snapped; then burst out laughing.

The shopping trips of his daughter often included a visit to the toy shop. Dr. Houghton always had in his study a little store of playthings, so that there would be a gift to brighten the hearts and the eyes of his little visitors.

A man who had always been active, who had always been devoted to his work, the imprisonment of invalidism chafed, galled; but neither age nor suffering had soured the milk of human kindness.

And the old whimsical humor was still a-light.

In a previous chapter I have told of the Socratic marionettes that gave the Rector, concealed behind the editorial proscenium, the opportunity to talk, *indirectly*, to his parishioners.

In the early days of her father's imprisonment in the invalid's chair, the daughter was surprised to hear a conversation going on in the study. She did not know any visitor had been admitted. She listened.

Strange Voice:—“Wouldn't you like some ice cream for dinner today, Dr. Houghton?”

Her Father's Voice:—“Yes, I'd like some very much indeed.”

Strange Voice:—“Well, why don't you ask your daughter to get some?”

Her Father's Voice:—“Oh, I don't want to bother her. I'm enough of a nuisance as it is.”

Dr. Houghton had ice cream for dinner that day.

Some ladies had come to call on the sick man. The daughter was seeing them out.

Strange Voice:—“I've been watching the clock—can you believe it, Dr. Houghton—those women have been talking steadily for twenty-two minutes.”

Her Father's Voice:—“Oh, yes: when women

get together they always have a lot to talk about."

Strange Voice:—"But I think it's a shame to leave an old man who's sick, all alone."

Her Father's Voice:—"No—I don't like to hear you say that—it isn't right—every one is very kind to me."

Dr. Houghton rarely bothered any one with the whims that are a part of invalidism: the "Strange Voice" was the handy medium through which most of his little wants were made known.

On a Sunday morning, when his condition permitted it, he was assisted into the church and took some part in the service. These renewals of his old life, fragmentary as they were, were a great pleasure to him.

Easter Sunday, 1923, he was very anxious to participate in the service, or, if not a participation, then at least to be in the church. But his physicians, Dr. Samuel W. Lambert and Dr. Edward Cussler, told him that it was impossible.

To his daughter he said: "I know I shall never go into the church again until I am carried there."

When the service in the church was finished, the choir came into the old-time study, now a sick room, and sang the Easter songs.

And now, at Dr. Houghton's request, the Vestry appointed a Vicar.

April 15, 1923.

MY DEAR PEOPLE:

In the time which God Himself has arranged, as He did twenty-five years ago in my case, when I was called here to be of such assistance as it might be in His good providence to my uncle, of saintly memory and of most devout love, the time has come when I am unable to fulfill all the duties which, twenty-five years ago, I was quite able to carry out, but I feel that I can no longer be responsible, humanly speaking, for the labors that belong to my office as Rector, but that I would have someone on whose shoulders I could lean and feel that they were strong to do the work which the dear Lord appointed for me long ago. . . . I am presenting to you today the Rev. Jackson H. Randolph Ray, who by my wish your Vestry have so graciously allotted me, who will, I believe, be strong in the work necessary to be carried out in this part of God's vineyard. I commend him to you. I commend him to you with my love. . . .

. . . The Vestry have been kind enough to say that I shall rest, or work as it pleases me, and I am grateful for their permission so to do. . . .

. . . I will go as often as it shall be pleasing to Almighty God to speak a word, and to say a prayer with you or to do whatsoever it

shall please God to give me strength and health to do, but in the meantime, through the Vestry, I have my leisure to gain strength and gain health here in God's vineyard. . . .

And to you, my dear friend, whom I am placing before the people as my chief helpmate in this work, I bid Godspeed, and may God the Father, and may God the Son, and may God the Holy Ghost, give you day by day and hour by hour, the blessing you need, and the blessing that will be required for that work of great importance which shall rest upon your shoulders. . . . God bless you.

GEORGE C. HOUGHTON.

Two days later, Dr. Houghton was alone with the nurse in the sick room.

His daughter, who was coming up the stairs, heard him cry out suddenly:

"I'm dying!"

The daughter called down the stairs, to the secretary in the office:

"Get Dr. Ray—quick! Tell him to bring the Sacraments!"

Her father nodded, yes. It was his last communication with mortal.

The Reserved Sacraments were kept in the Tabernacle on the Altar of the Lady Chapel—

the memorial to the wife of the dying priest; and from thence his last spiritual food was brought him.

Four days later, impressive ceremonies at The Little Church—four Requiem Masses, a funeral service—many people, distinguished clergy, distinguished pall-bearers.

Of all that was done in honor of the dead rector, that which was done by the police tells the most.

If I wanted to know the unknown life of a well known man, I would ask the police of his home town. They are about at all hours of the day and night; they come in contact with all classes of people. They see much; they hear much. Hard-shelled, tender-hearted, they know the man “who’s right.”

Voluntarily, the Police Department closed Twenty-ninth Street to traffic, while the funeral was being held; voluntarily, it sent an escort for the hearse. From The Little Church, up Fifth Avenue, through Forty-second Street to the Grand Central Depot, the funeral procession moved without a stop. Through those traffic-congested thoroughfares, the dead rector was given the right of way.

It was the last journey to Kensico Cemetery. The body was placed in the vault, beside the

one who had lain there those twenty-one long years.

*John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And many a canty day, John,
We've had wi' anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo.*

He had come down the hill alone. Now they slept “thegither at the foot.”

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